

THE ENTAIL :

OR

THE LAIRDS OF GRIPPY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

ANNALS OF THE PARISH, SIR ANDREW WYLIE, &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE ENTAIL.

CHAP. I.

IN the meantime, Charles and Isabella had enjoyed a large share of domestic felicity, rendered the more endearingly exquisite by their parental anxiety, for it had pleased Heaven at once to bless and burden their narrow circumstances with two beautiful children, James and Mary. Their income arising from the share which the old man had assigned of the business had, during the first two or three years subsequent to their marriage, proved sufficient for the supply of their restricted wants; but their expences began gradually to in-

crease, and about the end of ~~the~~ third year Charles found that they had incurred several small debts above their means of payment. These, in the course of the fourth, rose to such a sum, that, being naturally of an apprehensive mind, he grew uneasy at the amount, and came to the resolution to borrow two hundred pounds to discharge them. This, he imagined, there could be no difficulty in procuring: for, believing that he was the heir of entail to the main part of the estate which his father had so entirely redeemed, he conceived that he might raise the money on his reversionary prospects, and, with this view, he called one morning on Mr Keelevin to request his agency in the business.

“ I’m grieved, man,” said the honest lawyer, “ to hear that ye’re in such straits; but had na ye better speak to your father? It might bring on you his displeasure if he heard ye were borrowing money to be paid at his death. It’s a thing nae frien’

far less a father, would like done by himself."

"In truth," replied Charles, "I am quite sensible of that; but what can I do? for my father, ever since my brother Waty's marriage, has been so cold and reserved about his affairs to me, that every thing like confidence seems as if it were perished from between us."

Mr Keelevin, during this speech, raised his left arm on the elbow from the table at which he was sitting, and rested his chin on his hand. There was nothing in the habitual calm of his countenance which indicated what was passing in his heart, but his eyes once or twice glimmered with a vivid expression of pity.

"Mr Walkinshaw," said he, "if you dinna like to apply to your father yoursel, could na some friend mediate for you? Let me speak to him."

"It's friendly of you, Mr Keelevin, to offer to do that; but really, to speak plainly, I would far rather borrow the money

from a stranger, than lay myself open to any remarks. Indeed, for myself, I don't much care ; but ye ken my father's narrow ideas about household charges ; and may be he might take it on him to make remarks to my wife that I would na like to hear o'."

" But, Mr Charles, you know that monee canna be borrow't without security."

" I am aware of that ; and it's on that account I want your assistance. I should think that my chance of surviving my father is worth something."

" But the whole estate is strictly entailed, Mr Charles," replied the lawyer, with compassionate regard.

" The income, however, is all clear, Mr Keelevin."

" I dinna misdoubt that, Mr Charles, but the entail—Do you ken how it runs?"

" No ; but I imagine much in the usual manner."

" No, Mr Charles," said the honest writer, raising his head, and letting his

hand fall on the table, with a mournful emphasis ; “ No, Mr Charles, it does na run in the usual manner ; and I hope ye’ll no put ony reliance on’t. It was na right o’ your father to let you live in ignorance so long. May be it has been this to-look that has led you into the debts ye want to pay.”

The manner in which this was said affected the unfortunate first-born more than the meaning ; but he replied,—

“ No doubt, Mr Keelevin, I may have been less scrupulous in my expences than I would have been, had I not counted on the chance of my birth-right.”

“ Mr Charles, I’m sorry for you ; but I would na do a frien’s part by you, were I to keep you ony langer in the dark. Your father, Mr Charles, is an honest man ; but there’s a bee in his bonnet, as we a’ ken, anent his pedigree. I need na tell you how he has warslet to get back the inheritance o’ his forefathers ; but I am wae to say, that in a pursuit so merito-

rious, he has committed ae great fault. Really, Mr Charles, I have na hardly the heart to tell you."

"What is it?" said Charles, with emotion and apprehension.

"He has made a deed," said Mr Keelevin, "whereby he has cut you off frae the succession, in order that Walter, your brother, might be in a condition to make an exchange of the Plealands for the twa mailings that were wanting to make up wi' the Grippy property, a restoration of the auld estate of Kittlestonheugh; and I doubt it's o' a nature in consequence, that, even were he willing, canna be easily altered."

To this heart-withering communication Charles made no answer. He stood for several minutes astonished; and then giving Mr Keelevin a wild look, shuddered and quitted the office.

Instead of returning home, he rushed with rapid and unequal steps down the Gallowgate, and, turning to the left hand

in reaching the end of the street, never halted till he had gained the dark firs which overhang the cathedral and skirt the Molindinar Burn, which at the time was swelled with rains, and pouring its troubled torrent almost as violently as the tide of feelings that struggled in his bosom. Unconscious of what he did, and borne along by the whirlwind of his own thoughts, he darted down the steep, and for a moment hung on the rocks at the bottom as if he meditated some frantic leap. Recoiling and trembling with the recollections of his family, he then threw himself on the ground, and for some time shut his eyes as if he wished to believe that he was agitated only by a dream.

The scene and the day were in unison with the tempest which shook his frame and shivered his mind. The sky was darkly overcast. The clouds were rolling in black and lowering masses, through which an occasional gleam of sunshine flickered for a moment on the towers and

pinnacles of the cathedral, and glimmered in its rapid transit on the monuments and graves in the church-yard. A gloomy shadow succeeded; and then a white and ghastly light hovered along the ruins of the bishop's castle, and darted with a strong and steady ray on a gibbet which stood on the rising ground beyond. The gusty wind howled like a death dog among the firs, which waved their dark boughs like hearse plumes over him, and the voice of the raging waters encouraged his despair.

He felt as if he had been betrayed into a situation which compelled him to surrender all the honourable intents of his life, and that he must spend the comfortless remainder of his days in a conflict with poverty, a prey to all its temptations, expedients, and crimes. At one moment, he clenched his grasp, and gnashed his teeth, and smote his forehead, abandoning himself to the wild and headlong energies and instincts of a rage that was almost revenge; at another, the image of Isabella,

so gentle and so defenceless, rose in a burst of tenderness and sorrow, and subdued him with inexpressible grief. But the thought of his children in the heedless days of their innocence, condemned to beggary by a fraud against nature, again scattered these subsiding feelings like the blast that brushes the waves of the ocean into spindrift.

This vehemence of feeling could not last long without producing some visible effect. When the storm had in some degree spent itself, he left the wild and solitary spot where he had given himself so entirely up to his passion, and returned towards his home ; but his limbs trembled, his knees faltered, and a cold shivering vibrated through his whole frame. An intense pain was kindled in his forehead ; every object reeled and shuddered to him as he passed ; and, before he reached the house, he was so unwell that he immediately retired to bed. In the course of the afternoon he became delirious, and a rapid and raging fever terrified his ill-fated wife.

CHAP. II.

MR KEELEVIN, when Charles had left him, sat for some time with his cheek resting on his hand, reflecting on what had passed ; and in the afternoon, he ordered his horse, and rode over to Grippy, where he found the Laird sitting sullenly by himself in the easy chair by the fire-side, with a white night-cap on his head, and grey worsted stockings drawn over his knees.

“ I’m wae, Mr Walkinshaw,” said the honest lawyer, as he entered the room, “ to see you in sic an ailing condition ; what’s the matter wi’ you, and how lang hae ye been sae indisposed ?”

Claud had not observed his entrance ; for, supposing the noise in opening the door had been made by the Liddy in her manifold household cares, or by

some one of the servants, he never moved his head, but kept his eyes ruminatingly fixed on a peeling of soot that was ominously fluttering on one of the ribs of the grate, betokening, according to the most credible oracles of Scottish superstition, the arrival of a stranger, or the occurrence of some remarkable event. But, on hearing the voice of his legal friend, he turned briskly round.

“ Sit ye down, Mr Keelevin, sit ye down forenent me. What’s brought you here the day? Man, this is sore weather for ane at your time o’ life to come so far a-field,” was the salutation with which he received him.

“ Aye,” replied Mr Keelevin, “ baith you and me, Grippy, are beginning to be the waur o’ the wear; but I didna expek to find you in sic a condition as this. I hope it’s no the gout or the rheumatism.”

Claud, who had the natural horror of death as strong as most country gentlemen of a certain age, if not of all ages, did

not much relish either the observation or the inquiries. He, however, said, with affected indifference,—

“ No ! be thankit, it’s neither the t’ane nor the t’ither, but just a waff o’ cauld that I got twa nights ago ;—a bit tow’t that’s no worth the talking o’.”

“ I’m extraordinary glad to hear’t ; for, seeing you in sic a frail and feckless state, I was fear’t that ye were na in a way to converse on any concern o’ business. No that I hae muckle to say, but ye ken a’ sma’ things are a great fasherie to a weakly person, and I would na discompose you, Mr Walkinshaw, unless you just felt yoursel in your right ordinar, for, at your time o’ life, ony disturbance” * * * *

“ My time o’ life ?” interrupted the old man tartly. “ Surely I’m no sae auld that ye need to be speaking o’ my time o’ life ? But what’s your will, Mr Keelevin, wi’ me ?”

Whether all this sympathetic condolence, on the part of the lawyer, was said

in sincerity, or with any ulterior view, we need not pause to discuss, for the abrupt question of the invalid brought it at once to a conclusion.

“ In truth, Laird,” replied Mr Keelevin, “ I canna say that I hae ony thing o’ a particular speciality to trouble you anent, for I came hither more in the way o’ friendship than o’ business,—having had this morning a visit frae your son Charles, a fine weel-doing young man as can be.”

“ He’s weel enough,” said the old man gruffly, and the lawyer continued,—

“ ’Deed, Mr Walkinshaw, he’s mair than weel enough. He’s by common, and it was with great concern I heard that you and him are no on sic a footing of cordiality as I had thought ye were.”

“ Has he been making a complaint o’ me ?” said Claud looking sharply, and with a grim and knotted brow as if he was, at the same time, apprehensive and indignant.

“ He has mair sense and discretion,” re-

plied Mr Keelevin ; “ but he was speaking to me on a piece of business, and I was surprised he did na rather confer wi’ you ; till, in course of conversation, it fell out, as it were unawares, that he did na like to speak to you anent it ; the which dislike, I jealousy, could only proceed o’ some lack o’ confidence between you, mair than should ever be between a father and a weel-behaved son like Mr Charles.”

“ And what was’t ?” said Grippy drily.

“ I doubt that his income is scant to his want, Mr Walkinshaw.”

“ He’s an extravagant fool ; and ne’er had a hand to thrav a key in a lock ;—when I began the world I had na”——

“ Surely,” interrupted Mr Keelevin, “ ye could ne’er think the son o’ a man in your circumstances should hain and hamper as ye were necessitated to do in your younger years. But no to mak a hearing or an argument concerning the same—Mr Charles requires a smia’ sum to get him free o’ a wee bit difficulty, for,

ye ken, there are some folk, Mr Walkinshaw, that a flea-bite molests like the lash o' a whip."

The old man made no answer to this; but sat for some time silent, drawing down his brows and twirling his thumbs. Mr Keelevin waited in patience till he should digest the reply he so evidently meditated.

"I hae ay thought Charlie honest, at least," said Grippy; "but I maun say that this fashes me, for if he's in sic straits, there's no telling what liberties he may be led to tak wi' my property in the shop."

Mr Keelevin, who, in the first part of this reply, had bent eagerly forward, was so thunderstruck by the conclusion, that he threw himself back in his chair with his arms extended; but in a moment recovering from his consternation, he said, with fervour,—

"Mr Walkinshaw, I mind weel the reproof ye gave me when I remonstrated wi'

you against the injustice ye were doing the poor lad in the entail, but there's no consideration on this earth will let me alloo you to gang on in a course of error and prejudice. Your son is an honest young man. I wish I could say his father kent his worth, or was worthy o' him—and I'll no see him wrangeously driven to the door, without taking his part, and letting the world ken wha's to blame. I'll no say ye hae defrauded him o' his birth-right, for the property was your ain—but if ye drive him forth the shop, and cast him wi' his sma family on the scrimp mercy of mankind, I would be wanting to human nature in general, if I did na say it was most abominable, and that you yoursel, wi' a' your trumpery o' Walkinshaws and Kittlestonheughs, ought to be scourged by the hands o' the hangman. So do as ye like, Mr Walkinshaw, ride to the deevil at the full gallop for ought I care, but ye's no get out o' this world without

hearing the hue and cry, that every Christian soul canna but raise after you."

Claud was completely cowed both by the anger and menace of the honest lawyer, but still more by the upbraidings of his own startled conscience—and he said, in a humiliated tone, that almost provoked contempt,—

"Ye're owre hasty, Mr Keelevin. I did na mint a word about driving him forth the shop. Did he tell you how muckle his defect was?"

"Twa miserable hundred pounds," replied Mr Keelevin, somewhat subsiding into his wonted equanimity.

"Twa hundred pound debt!" exclaimed Claud.

"Aye," said Mr Keelevin, "and I marvel it's no mair, when I consider the stinting and the sterile father o' him."

"If I had the siller, Mr Keelevin," replied Claud, "to convince baith you and him that I'm no the niggard ye tak me for, I would gi'e you't wi' hearty gude will; but

the advance I made to get Geordie into his partnership has for the present rookit me o' a' I had at command."

"No possible!" exclaimed Mr Keelevin, subdued from his indignation; adding, "and heavens preserve us, Mr Walkinshaw, an ony thing were happening on a sudden to carry you aff, ye hae made na provision for Charlie nor your dochter."

There was something in this observation which made the old man shrink up into himself, and vibrate from head to heel. In the course, however, of less than a minute, he regained his self-possession, and said,—

"'Deed your observe, Mr Keelevin, is very just, and I ought to do something to provide for what may come to pass. I maun try and get Watty to concur wi' me in some bit settlement that may lighten the disappointment to Charlie and Meg, should it please the Lord to tak me to himsel without a reasonable warning. Can sic a paper be made out?"

"O, yes," replied the worthy lawyer,

delighted with so successful an issue to his voluntary mission; “ ye hae twa ways o’ doing the business; either by getting Watty to agree to an aliment, or by making a bond of provision to Charles and Mrs Milrookit.”

Claud said he would prefer the former mode : observing, with respect to the latter, that he thought it would be a cheating o’ the law to take the other course.

“ As for cheating the law,” said the lawyer, “ ye need gie yoursel no uneasiness about it, provided ye do honestly by your ain bairns, and the rest o’ the community.”

And it was in consequence agreed, that, in the course of a day or two, Claud should take Walter to Glasgow, to execute a deed, by which, in the event of surviving his father, he would undertake to pay a certain annuity for the behoof of Charles’s family, and that of his sister, Mrs Milrookit.

CHAP. III.

IN furtherance of the arrangement agreed upon, as we have described in the foregoing chapter, as soon as Mr Keelevin had retired, Claud summoned Walter into the parlour. It happened, that the Leddy, during the period of the lawyer's visit, had been so engaged in another part of the house, that she was not aware of the conference, till, by chance, she saw him riding down the avenue. We need not, therefore, say that she experienced some degree of alarm, at the idea of a lawyer having been with her husband, unknown to her; and particularly, when, so immediately after his departure, her darling was requested to attend his father.

The mother and son entered the room together. Walter came from the nursery,

where he had been dandling his child, and his appearance was not of the most prepossessing kind. From the death of his wife, in whose time, under her dictation, he was brushed up into something of a gentlemanly exterior, he had become gradually more and more slovenly. He only shaved on Saturday night, and buttoned his breeches knees on Sunday morning. Nor was the dress of Leddy Grippy at all out of keeping with that of her hopeful favourite. Her, time-out-of-mind, red quilted silk petticoat was broken into many holes ;—her thrice dyed double tabinet gown, of bottle-green, with large ruffle cuffs, was in need of another dip ; for, in her various culinary inspections, it had received many stains, and the superstructure of lawn and catgut, ornamented with ribbons, dyed blea in ink, surmounting her ill-toiletted toupee, had every appearance of having been smoked into yellow, beyond all power of blanching in the bleacher's art.

“ And so, gudeman,” said she, on enter-

ing the room, "ye hae had that auld sneck-drawer, Keelevin, wi' you? I won'er what you and him can hae to say in sic a clandestine manner, that the door maun be ay steekit when ye're thegither at your confabbles. Surely there's nae honesty that a man can hae, whilk his wife ought na to come in for a share of."

"Sit down, Girzy Hypel, and haud thy tongue," was the peevish command which this speech provoked.

"What for will I haud my tongue? a fool posture that would be, and no very commodious at this time; for ye see my fingers are coomy."

"Woman, t'ou's past bearing!" exclaimed her disconcerted husband.

"An it's nae shame to me, gudeman; for every body kens I'm a grannie."

The Laird smote his right thigh, and shook his left hand, with vexation; presently, however, he said,—

"Weel, weel; but sit ye down, and Watty, tak t'ou a chair beside her; for I

want to consult you anent a paper that I'm mindit to hae drawn out for a satisfaction to you a' ; for nane can tell when their time may come."

" Ye ne'er made a mair sensible observe, gudeman, in a' your days," replied the Leddy, sitting down; " and it's vera right to make your will and testament; for ye ken what a straemash happened in the Glen-gowlmahallaghan family, by reason o' the Laird holographing his codicil; whilk, to be sure, was a dreadfu' omission, as my cousin, his wife, fand in her widowhood; for a' the moveables thereby gaed wi' the heritage to his auld son by the first wife—even the vera silver pourie that I gied her mysel wi' my own hands, in a gift at her marriage—a' gaed to the heir."

" T'ou kens," said Claud, interrupting her oration, " that I hae provided thee wi' the liferent o' a house o' fifteen pounds a-year, furniture, and a jointure of a hundred and twenty over and aboon the outcoming o' thy father's gathering. So t'ou canna

expek, Girzy, that I would wrang our bairns wi' ony mair overlay on thy account."

"Ye're grown richer, gudeman, than when we came thegither," replied the Leddy; "and ne'er a man made siller without his wife's leave. So it would be a most hard thing, after a' my toiling and moiling, to make me nae better o't than the stricts o' the law in my marriage articles and my father's will; whilk was a gratus amous, that made me nane behauden to you.—No, an ye mean to do justice, gudeman, I'll get my thirds o' the conquest ye hae gotten sin the time o' our marriage; and I'll be content wi' nae less."

"Weel, weel, Girzy, we'll no cast out about a settlement for thee."

"It would be a fearful thing to hear tell o' an we did," replied the Leddy: "Living as we hae lived, a comfort to ane anither for thirty years, and bringing up sic a braw family, wi' so meikle credit. No, gudeman, I hae mair confidence in you than to misdoot your love and kindness,

noo that ye're drawing so near your latter end as to be seriously thinking o' making a will. But, for a' that, I would like to ken what I'm to hae."

"Very right, Girzy; very right," said Claud; "but, before we can come to a clear understanding, me and Watty maun conform in a bit paper by oursels, just that there may be nae debate hereafter about his right to the excambio we made for the Plealands."

"I'll no put hand to ony drumhead paper again," said Watty, "for fear it wrang my wee Betty Bodle."

Although this was said in a vacant heedless manner, it yet disturbed the mind of his father exceedingly, for the strange obstinacy with which the natural had persisted in his refusal to attend the funeral of his wife, had shown that there was something deeper and more intractable in his character than any one had previously imagined. But opposition had only the effect of making Claud more pertinacious,

while it induced him to **change** his mode of operation. Perceiving, or at least being afraid that he might again call his obduracy into action, he accordingly shifted his ground, and, instead of his wonted method of treating Walter with commands and menaces, he dexterously availed himself of the Leddy's auxiliary assistance.

"Far be it, Watty, frae me, thy father," said he, "to 'think or wis wrang to thee or thine; but t'ou kens that in family settlements, where there's a patch't property like ours, we maun hae conjunk proceedings. Noo, as I'm fain to do something satisfactory to thy mother, t'ou'll surely never objek to join me in the needfu' instruments to gie effek to my intentions."

"I'll do every thing to serve my mother," replied Walter, "but I'll no sign ony papers."

"Surely, Watty Walkinshaw," exclaimed the old Leddy, surprised at this repetition of his refusal, "ye would na see me in want, and driven to a needcessity to gang

frae door to door, wi' a meal-pock round my neck, and an oaken ring in my hand?"

"I would rather gie you my twa dollars, and the auld French half-a-crown, that I got long syne, on my birth-day, frae grannie," said Watty.

"Then what for will ye no let your father make a rightfu' settlement?" cried his mother.

"I'm sure I dinna hinder him. He may mak fifty settlements for me; I'll ne'er fin' fau't wi' him."

"Then," said the Leddy, "ye canna objek to his reasonable request."

"I objek to no reasonable request; I only say, mother, that I'll no sign ony paper whatsoever, wheresomever, howsomever, nor ever and ever—so ye need na try to fleetch me."

"Ye're an outstrapolous ne'er-do-weel," cried the Leddy, in a rage, knocking her neives smartly together, "to speak to thy mother in that way; t'ou sall sign the paper, an te life be in thy body."

“I’ll no wrang my ain bairn for father nor mother; I’ll gang to Jock Harrigals, the flesher, and pay him to hag aff my right hand, afore I put pen to law-paper again.”

“This is a’ I get for my love and affection,” exclaimed the Leddy, bursting into tears; while her husband, scarcely less agitated by the firmness with which his purpose was resisted, sat in a state of gloomy abstraction, seemingly unconscious of the altercation. “But,” added Mrs Walkinshaw. “I’m no in thy reverence, t’ou unnatural Absalom, to rebel sae against thy parents. I hae may be a hoggar, and I ken whan I die wha s’all get the gouden guts o’t—Wilt t’ou sign the paper?”

“I’ll burn aff my right hand in the lowing fire, that I may ne’er be able to write the scrape o’ a pen;” and with these emphatic words, said in a soft and simple manner, he rose from his seat, and was actually proceeding towards the fire-place, when a

loud knocking at the door disturbed, and put an end to the conversation. It was a messenger sent from old Lady Plealands, to inform her daughter of Charles' malady, and to say that the doctor, who had been called in, was greatly alarmed at the rapid progress of the disease.

CHAP. IV.

LEDDY GRIPPY was one of those worthy gentlewomen, who, without the slightest interest or feeling in any object or purpose with which they happen to be engaged, conceive themselves bound to perform all the customary indications of the profoundest sympathy and the deepest sensibility. Accordingly, no sooner did she receive the message of her son's melancholy condition, than she proceeded forthwith to prepare herself for going immediately to Glasgow.

“ I canna expek, gudeman,” said she, “ that wi’ your host ye’ll come wi’ me to Glasgow on this very sorrowful occasion ; therefore I hope ye’ll tak gude care o’ yoursel, and see that the servan’ lasses get your water-gruel, wi’ a tamarind in’t,

at night, if it should please Charlie's Maker, by reason o' the dangerous distemper, no to alloo me to come hame."

The intelligence, however, had so troubled the old man, that he scarcely heard her observation. The indisposition of his son seemed to be somehow connected with the visit of Mr Keelevin, which it certainly was; and while his wife busily prepared for her visit, his mind wandered in devious conjectures, without being able to reach anything calculated either to satisfy his wonder or to appease his apprehension.

"It's very right, Girzy, my dear," said he, "that ye sou'd gang in and see Charlie, poor lad; I'm extraordinar sorry to hear o' this income, and ye'll be sure to tak care he wants for nothing. Hear'st t'ou; look into the auld pocket-book in the scrutoire neuk; t'ou'l aiblins fin' there a five-pound note,—tak it wi' thee—there's no sic an extravagant commodity in ony man's house as a delirious fever."

“ Ah !” replied the Leddy, looking at her darling and ungrateful Walter, “ ye see what it is to hae a kind father; but ill ye deserve ony attention either frae father or mother, for your condumacity is ordained to break our hearts.”

“ Mother,” said Walter, “ dinna be in sic a hurry—I hae something that ’ill do Charlie good.” In saying which, he rose and went to the nursery, whence he immediately returned with a pill box.

“ There, mother ! tak that wi’ you ; it’s a box o’ excellent medicaments, either for the cough, or the cauld, or shortness o’ breath ; to say naething amang frien’s o’ a constipation. Gie Charlie twa at bedtime and ane in the morning, and ye’ll see an effek sufficient to cure every impediment in man or woman.”

Leddy Grippy, with the utmost contempt for the pills, snatched the box out of his hand, and flung it behind the fire. She then seated herself in the chair opposite her husband, and while she at the

same time tied her cloak and placed on her bonnet, she said,—

“ I’ll alloo at last, gudeman, that I hae been a’ my days in an error, for I could na hae believed that Watty was sic an idiot o’ a naturalist, had I no lived to see this day. But the will o’ Providence be done on earth as it is in heaven, and let us pray that he may be forgiven the sair heart he has gi’en to us his aged parents, as we forgive our debtors. I won’er, howsever, that my mother did na send word o’ the nature o’ this delirietness o’ Charlie, for to be surely it’s a very sudden come-to-pass, but the things o’ time are no to be lippent to, and life fleeth away like a weaver’s shuttle, and no man knoweth wheresoever it findeth rest for the sole of its foot. But, before I go, ye’ll no neglek to tell Jenny in the morning to tak the three spyniels o’ yarn to Josey Thrums, the weaver, for my Dornick towelling; and ye’ll be sure to put Tam Modiwart in mind that he’s no to harl the plough out o’er the green

brae till I get my big washing out o' hand. As for t'ee, Watty, stay till this calamity's past, and I'll let ee ken what it is to treat baith father and mother wi' sae little reverence. Really, gudeman, I begin to hae a notion, that he's, as auld Elspeth Freet, the midwife, ance said to me, a ta'enawa, and I would be nane surprised, that whoever lives to see him dee will find in the bed a benweed or a windlestrae, instead o' a Christian corpse. But sufficient for the day is the evil thereof; and this sore news o' our auld son should mak us walk humbly, and no repine at the mercies set before us in this our sinfu' estate."

The worthy Leddy might have continued her edifying exhortation for some time longer, but her husband grew impatient, and harshly interrupted her eloquence, by reminding her that the day was far advanced, and that the road to Glasgow was both deep and dreigh.

"I would counsel you, Girzy Hypel," said he, "no to put off your time wi' sic

havers here, but gang intil the town, and send us out word in the morning, if ye dinna come hame, how Charlie may happen to be; for I canna but say that thir news are no just what I could hae wiss'd to hear at this time. As for what we hae been saying to Watty, we baith ken he's a kind-hearted chiel, and he'll think better or the morn o' what we were speaking about—will na ye, Watty?"

"I'll think as muckle's ye like," said the faithful natural; "but I'll sign nae papers; that's a fact afore divines. What for do ye ay fash me wi' your deeds and your instruments? I'm sure baith Charlie and Geordie could write better than me, and ye ne'er troublet them. But I jealousy the cause—an my grandfather had na left me his lawful heir to the Plealands, I might hae sat at the chumley lug whistling on my thumb. We a' hae frien's anew when we hae ony thing, and so I see in a' this flyting and fleetching; but ye'll flyte and ye'll fleetch till puddocks grow chunky-

stances before ye'll get me to wrang my ain bairn, my bonny wee Betty Bodle, ~~that~~ has na ane that cares for her, but only my leafu' lane."

The Leddy would have renewed her remonstratory animadversions on his obstinacy, but the Laird again reminded her of the length of the journey in such an evening before her, and after a few half advices and half reproaches, she left the house.

Indisposed as Claud had previously felt himself, or seemed to be, she had not been long away, when he rose from his easy chair, and walked slowly across the room, with his hands behind, swinging his body heavily as he paced the floor. Walter, who still remained on his seat, appeared for some time not to notice his father's gestures ; but the old man unconsciously began to quicken his steps, ~~and~~ at last walked so rapidly that his son's attention was roused.

"Father," said he, "hae ye been taking

epicacco, for that was just the way that I was telt to gang, when I was last no weel?"

"No, no," exclaimed the wretched old man; "but I hae drank the bitterest dose o' life. There's nae vomit for a sick soul—nae purge for a foul conscience."

These were, however, confessions that escaped from him unawares, like the sparks that are elicited in violent percussions,—for he soon drew himself firmly and bravely up, as if he prepared himself to defy the worst that was in store for him; but this resolution also as quickly passed away, and he returned to his easy chair, and sat down, as if he had been abandoned of all hope, and had resigned himself into a dull and sleepy lethargy.

For about half an hour he continued in this slumbering and inaccessible state, at the end of which he called one of the servants, and bade him be ready to go to Glasgow by break of day, and bring Mr Keelevin before breakfast. "Something

maun be done," said he as the servant, accompanied by Walter, left the room ; " the curse of God has fallen upon me, my hands are tied, a dreadfu' chain is fastened about me ; I hae cheated mysel, and there's nae bail—no, not in the Heavens—for the man that has wilfully raffled away his own soul in the guilty game o' pride."

CHAP. V.

MEANWHILE, the disease which had laid Charles prostrate was proceeding with a terrific and devastating fury. Before his mother reached the house, he had lost all sense of himself and situation, and his mind was a chaos of the wildest and most extravagant phantasies. Occasionally, however, he would sink into a momentary calm, when a feeble gleam of reason would appear amidst his ravings, like the transient glimmer of a passing light from the shore on the black waves of the stormy ocean, when the cry has arisen at midnight of a vessel on the rocks, and her crew in jeopardy. But these breathing pauses of the fever's rage were, perhaps, more dreadful than its violence, for they were accompanied with a return of the moral

anguish which had brought on his malady; and as often as his eye caught the meek, but desponding countenance of Isabella, as she sat by his bed-side, he would make a convulsive effort to raise himself, and instantly relapse into the tempestuous raptures of the delirium. In this state he passed the night.

Towards morning symptoms of a change began to show themselves,—the turbulence of his thoughts subsided,—his breathing became more regular; and both Isabella and his mother were persuaded that he was considerably better. Under this impression, the old lady, at day-break, dispatched a messenger to inform his father of the favourable change, who, in the interval, had passed a night, in a state, not more calm, and far less enviable, than that of his distracted son.

Whatever was the motive which induced Claud, on the preceding evening, to determine on sending for Mr Keelevin, it would appear that it did not long main-

tain its influence; for, before going to bed, he countermanded the order. Indeed, his whole behaviour that night indicated a strange and unwonted degree of indecision. It was evident that he meditated some intention, which he hesitated to carry into effect; and the conflict banished sleep from his pillow. When the messenger from Glasgow arrived, he was already dressed, and, as none of the servants were stirring, he opened the door himself. The news certainly gave him pleasure, but they also produced some change in the secret workings of his mind, of no auspicious augury to the fulfilment of the parental intention which he had probably formed; but which he was as probably reluctant to realize, as it could not be carried into effect without material detriment to that one single dominant object to which his whole life, efforts, and errors, had been devoted. At least from the moment he received the agreeable intelligence that Charles was better, his agitation ceased,

and he resumed his seat in the elbow chair, by the parlour fire-side, as composedly as if nothing had occurred, in any degree, to trouble the apparently even tenor of his daily unsocial and solitary reflections. In this situation he fell asleep, from which he was roused by another messenger with still more interesting intelligence to him, than even the convalescence, as it was supposed, of his favourite son.

Mrs George Walkinshaw had, for some time, given a large promise, in her appearance, of adding to the heirs of Kittlestoneheugh; but, by her residence in Glasgow, and holding little intercourse with the Grippy family, owing to her own situation, and to her dislike of the members, especially after Walter had been brought back with his child; the Laird and Lady were less acquainted with her maternal progress than might have been expected, particularly when the anxiety of the old man, with respect to male issue, is

considered. Such things, however, are of common occurrence in all families; and it so happened, that, during the course of this interesting night, Mrs George had been delivered; and that her husband, as in duty bound, in the morning, dispatched a maid-servant to inform his father and mother of the joyous event.

The messenger, Jenny Purdie, had several years before been in the servitude of the Laird's house, from which she translated herself to that of George. Being something forward, at the same time sly and adroit, and having heard how much her old master had been disappointed that Walter's daughter was not a son, she made no scruple of employing a little address in communicating her news. Accordingly, when the Laird, disturbed in his slumber by her entrance, roused himself, and turned round to see who it was that had come into the room, she presented herself, as she had walked from the royal city muffled up in a dingy

red cloak, her dark blue and white striped petticoat, sorely scanty, and her glowing purple legs, and well spread shoeless feet, bearing liberal proof of the speed with which she had spattered and splashed along the road.

“ I wis you meikle joy, Laird ! I hae brought you blithesmeat,” was her salutation.

“ What is’t, Jenny ?” said the old man.

“ I’ll let you guess that, unless ye promise to gi’e me half-a-crown,” was her reply.

“ T’ou canna think I would ware less on sic errand as t’ou’s come on. Is’t a lad-die ?”

“ It’s far better, Laird,” said Jenny triumphantly.

“ Is’t twins ?” exclaimed the Laird, sympathizing with her exultation.

“ A half-crown, a half-crown, Laird,” was, however, all the satisfaction he received. “ Down wi’ the dust.”

“ An t’ou’s sae on thy peremptors, I

fancy I maun comply. There, take it, and welcome," said he, pulling the money from under the flap of his waistcoat pocket; while Jenny, stretching her arm, as she hoisted it from under the cloak, eagerly bent forward and took the silver out of his hand, instantaneously affecting the greatest gravity of face.

"Laird," said she, "ye mauna be angry wi' me, but I did na like just to dumb-foun'er you a' at ance wi' the news; my mistress, it's very true, has been brought to bed, but it's no as ye expek it."

"Then it's but a dochter?" replied the Laird discontentedly.

"No, Sir, it's no a dochter.—It's twa dochters, Sir!" exclaimed Jenny, scarcely able to repress her risibility, while she endeavoured to assume an accent of condolence.

Claud sank back in his chair, and, drooping his head, gave a deep sigh.

"But," rejoined the adroit Jenny, "it's a gude earnest of a braw family, so keep

up your heart, Laird, aiblins the neist birds may be a' cocks ; there ne'er was a goose without a gander."

"Gae bot the house, and fash na me wi' thy clishmaclavers. I say gae bot the house," cried the Laird, in a tone so deep and strong, that Jenny's disposition to gossip was most effectually daunted, and she immediately retired.

For some time after she had left the room, Claud continued sitting in the same posture with which he had uttered the command, leaning slightly forward, and holding the arms of the easy-chair graspingly by both his hands, as if in the act of raising himself. Gradually, however, he relaxed his hold, and subsided slowly and heavily into the position in which he usually fell asleep. Shutting his eyes, he remained in that state for a considerable time, exhibiting no external indication of the rush of mortified feelings, which, like a subterranean stream of some acrid mi-

neral, struggled through all the abysses of his bosom.

This last stroke—the birth of twin daughters—seemed to perfect the signs and omens of that displeasure with which he had for some time thought the disinherittance of his first-born was regarded ; and there was undoubtedly something sublime in the fortitude with which he endured the gnawings of remorse.—It may be impossible to consider the course of his sordid ambition without indignation ; but the strength of character which enabled him to contend at once with his paternal partiality, and stand firm in his injustice before what he awfully deemed the frowns and the menaces of Heaven, forms a spectacle of moral bravery that cannot be contemplated without emotions of wonder mingled with dread.

CHAP. VI.

THE fallacious symptoms in the progress of Charles's malady, which had deceived his wife and mother, assumed, on the third day, the most alarming appearance. Mr Keelevin, who, from the interview, had taken an uncommon interest in his situation, did not, however, hear of his illness till the doctors, from the firmest persuasion that he could not survive, had expressed some doubts of his recovery ; but, from that time, the inquiries of the honest lawyer were frequent ; and, notwithstanding what had passed on the former occasion, he resolved to make another attempt on the sympathies of the father. For this purpose, on the morning of the fifth day, which happened to be Sunday, he called at Charles's house, to inquire how he was,

previous to the visit which he intended to pay to Grippy. But the servant who attended the door was in tears, and told him that her master was in the last struggles of life.

Any other general acquaintance would, on receiving such intelligence, however deeply he might have felt affected, have retired; but the ardent mind and simplicity of Mr Keelevin prompted him to act differently; and without replying to the girl, he softly slipped his feet from his shoes, and stepping gently to the sick chamber, entered it unobserved; so much were those around the death-bed occupied with the scene before them.

Isabella was sitting at the bed-head, holding her dying husband by both the hands, and bending over him almost as insensible as himself. His mother was sitting near the foot of the bed, with a phial in one hand, and a towel, resting on her knee, in the other, looking over her left shoulder towards her son, with an eager

countenance, in which curiosity, and alarm, and pity, were, in rapid succession, strangely and vacantly expressed. At the foot of the bed, the curtains of which were drawn aside, the two little children stood wondering in solemn innocence at the mournful mystery which Nature was performing with their father. Mr Keelevin was more moved by their helpless astonishment than even by the sight of the last and lessening heavings and pantings of his dying friend ; and, melted to tears, he withdrew, and wept behind the door.

In the course of three or four minutes, a rustle in the chamber roused him ; and on looking round, he saw Isabella standing on the floor, and her mother-in-law, who had dropped the phial, sitting, with a look of horror, holding up her hand, which quivered with agitation. He stepped forward, and giving a momentary glance at the bed, saw that all was over ; but, before he could turn round to address himself to the ladies, the children uttered a shrill

piercing shriek of terror ; and running to their mother, hid their little faces in her dress, and clasped her fearfully in their arms.

For some minutes he was overcome. The young, the beautiful, the defenceless widow, was the first that recovered her self-possession. A flood of tears relieved her heart ; and bending down, and folding her arms round her orphans, she knelt, and said, with an upward look of supplication, “ God will protect you.”

Mr Keelevin was still unable to trust himself to say a word ; but he approached, and gently assisting her to rise, led her, with the children, into the parlour, where old Lady Plealands was sitting alone, with a large psalm-book in her hand. Her spectacles lying on a table in the middle of the room, showed that she had been unable to read.

He then returned to bring Leddy Grippy also away from the body, but met her in the passage. We dare not venture to repeat

what she said to him, for she was a mother; but the result was, a request from her that he would undertake to communicate the intelligence to her husband, and to beg him either to come to her in the course of the day, or send her some money: "For," said she, "this is a bare house, Mr Keelevin; and Heaven only knows what's to become o' the wee orphans."

The kind-hearted lawyer needed, however, no argument to spur him on to do all that he could in such a time, and in such circumstances, to lighten the distress and misery of a family whose necessities he so well knew. On quitting the house, he proceeded immediately towards Grippy, ruminating on the scene he had witnessed, and on the sorrows which he foresaw the desolate widow and her children were destined to suffer.

The weather, for some days before, had been unsettled and boisterous; but it was that morning uncommonly fine for the advanced state of the season. Every

thing was calm and in repose, as if Nature herself had hallowed the Sabbath. Mr Keelevin walked thoughtfully along, the grief of his reflections being gradually subdued by the benevolence of his intentions; but he was a man well stricken in years, and the agitation he had undergone made the way appear to him so long, that he felt himself tired, in so much, that when he came to the bottom of the lane which led to Kilmarkeckle, he sat down to rest himself on the old dike, where Claud himself had sat, on his return from the town, after executing the fatal entail. Absorbed in the reflections to which the event of the morning naturally gave rise, he leaned for some time pensively forward, supporting his head on his hand, insensible to every object around, till he was roused by the cooing of a pigeon in the field behind him. The softness and the affectionate sound of its tones comforted his spirits as he thought of his client's harsh temper, and he raised his eyes and looked on the

beautiful tranquillity of the landscape before him, with a sensation of freshness and pleasure, that restored him to confidence in the charity of his intentions. The waters of the river were glancing to the cloudless morning sun,—a clear bright cheerfulness dwelt on the foreheads of the distant hills,—the verdure of the nearer fields seemed to be gladdened by the presence of spring,—and a band of little school-boys, in their Sunday clothes, playing with a large dog on the opposite bank of the river, was in unison with the general benevolence that smiled and breathed around, but was liveliest in his own heart.

CHAP. VII.

THE benevolent lawyer found the old man in his accustomed seat by the fire-side. Walter was in the room with him, dressed for church, and dandling his child. At first Mr Keelevin felt a little embarrassment, not being exactly aware in what manner the news he had to communicate might be received ; but seeing how Walter was engaged, he took occasion to commend his parental affection.

“ That’s acting like a father, Mr Walter,” said he ; “ for a kind parent innocently pleasuring his bairn is a sight that the very angels are proud to look on. Mak muckle o’ the poor wee thing, for nobody can tell how long she may be spared to you. I dare say, Mr Walkinshaw,” he added, addressing himself to

Claud, "ye hae mony a time been happy in the same manner wi' your own children?"

"I had something else to tak up my mind," replied the old man gruffly, not altogether pleased to see the lawyer, and apprehensive of some new animadversions.

"Nae doubt, your's has been an eydent and industrious life," said Mr Keelevin, "and hitherto it has na been without a large scare o' comfort. Ye canna, however, expek a greater constancy in fortune and the favour o' Providence than falls to the common lot of man; and ye maun lay your account to meet wi' troubles and sorrows as weel as your neighbours."

This was intended by the speaker as a prelude to the tidings he had brought, and was said in a mild and sympathetic manner; but the heart of Claud, galled and skinless by the corrosion of his own thoughts, felt it as a reproach, and he interrupted him sharply.

"What ken ye, Mr Keelevin, either o'

my trumps or my troubles?" And he subjoined, in his austerest and most emphatic manner, "The inner man alone knows, whether, in the gifts o' fortune, he has gotten gude, or but only gowd. Mr Keel-evin, I hae lived long enough to mak an observe on prosperity,—the whilk is, that the doited and heedless world is very ready to mistak the smothering growth of the ivy, on a doddered stem, for the green boughs o' a sound and flourishing tree."

To which Walter added singingly, as he swung his child by the arms,—

“ Near planted by a river,
Which in his season yields his fruit,
And his leaf fadeth never.”

“ But no to enter upon any controversy, Mr Walkinshaw,” said Mr Keelevin,—“ ye’ll no hae heard the day how your son Charles is ?”

“ No,” replied Claud, with a peculiarly impressive accent ; “ but, at the latest last night, the gudewife sent word he was very ill.”

“ I’m greatly concerned about him,” resumed the lawyer, scarcely aware of the address with which, in his simplicity, he was moving on towards the fatal communication ; “ I am greatly concerned about him, but mair for his young children—they’ll be very helpless orphans, Mr Walkinshaw.”

“ I ken that,” was the stern answer, uttered with such a dark and troubled look, that it quite daunted Mr Keelevin at the moment from proceeding.

“ Ye ken that !” cried Walter, pausing, and setting down the child on the floor, and seating himself beside it ; “ how do ye ken that, father ?”

The old man eyed him for a moment with a fierce and strong aversion, and, turning to Mr Keelevin, shook his head, but said nothing.

“ What’s done, is done, and canna be helped,” resumed the lawyer ; “ but reparation may yet, by some sina cost and cooking, be made ; and I hope Mr Wal-

kinshaw, considering what has happened, ye'll do your duty."

" I'll sign nae papers," interposed Walter; " I'll do nothing to wrang my wee Betty Bodle,"—and he fondly kissed the child.

Mr Keelevin looked compassionately at the natural, and then, turning to his father, said,—

" I hae been this morning to see Mr Charles."

" Weel, and how is he?" exclaimed the father eagerly.

The lawyer, for about the term of a minute, made no reply, but looked at him steadily in the face, and then added solemnly,

" He's no more!"

At first the news seemed to produce scarcely any effect; the iron countenance of the old man underwent no immediate change—he only remained immoveable in the position in which he had received the shock; but presently Mr Keelevin saw

that he did not fetch his breath, and that his lips began to contract asunder, and to expose his yellow teeth with the grin almost of a skull.

“Heavens preserve us, Mr Walkinshaw !” cried Mr Keelevin, rising to his assistance ; but, in the same moment, the old man uttered a groan so deep and dreadful, so strange and superhuman, that Walter snatched up his child, and rushed in terror out of the room. After this earthquake-struggle, he in some degree recovered himself, and the lawyer returned to his chair, where he remained some time silent.

“I had a fear o’t, but I was na prepar’t, Mr Keelevin, for this,” said the miserable father ; “and noo I’ll kick against the pricks nae langer. Wonderful God ! I bend my aged grey head at thy footstool. O lay not thy hand heavier upon me than I am able to bear. Mr Keelevin, ye ance said the entail cou’d be broken if I were to die insolvent—mak me sae in the name of the

God I have dared so long to fight against
An Charlie's dead—murdered by my de-
vices ! Weel do I mind, when he was a
playing bairn, that I first kent the bless-
ing of what it is to hae something to be
kind to ;—aften and aften did his glad
and bright young face thaw the frost that
had bound up my heart, but ay something
new o' the world's pride and trash cam in
between, and hardent it mair and mair.—
But a's done noo, Mr Keelevin—the fight's
done and the battle won, and the avenging
God of righteousness and judgment is vic-
torious.”

Mr Keelevin sat in silent astonishment
at this violence of sorrow. He had no
previous conception of that vast abyss of
sensibility which lay hidden and unknown
within the impenetrable granite of the old
man's pride and avarice ; and he was
amazed and overawed when he beheld it
burst forth, as when the fountains of the
great deep were broken up, and the deluge
swept away the earliest and the oldest ini-
quities of man.

The immediate effect, when he began to recover from his wonder, was a sentiment of profound reverence.

“ Mr Walkinshaw,” said he, “ I have long done you great injustice ;” and he was proceeding to say something more as an apology, but Claud interrupted him.

“ You hae ne’er done me any manner of wrong, Mr Keelevin ; but I hae sinned greatly and lang against my ain nature, and it’s time I sou’d repent. In a few sorrowful days I maun follow the lamb I hae sacrificed on the altars o’ pride ; speed a’ ye dow to mak the little way I ~~hae~~ to gang to the grave easy to one that travels wi’ a broken heart. I gie you nae further instructions—your skill and honest conscience will tell you what is needful to be done ; and when the paper’s made out, come to me. For the present leave me, and in your way hame bid Dr Denholm come hither in the afternoon.”

“ I think, Mr Walkinshaw,” replied Mr Keelevin, falling into his professional man-

ner on receiving these orders, "that it would be as weel for me to come back the morn, when ye're more composed, to get the particulars of what ye wish done."

"O man!" exclaimed the hoary penitent, "ye ken little o' me. Frae the very dawn o' life I hae done nothing but big and build an idolatrous image; and when it was finished, ye saw how I laid my first-born on its burning and brazen altar. But ye never saw what I saw—the face of an angry God looking constantly from behind a cloud that darkened a' the world like ~~the~~ shadow of death to me; and ye canna feel what I feel now, when His dreadful right hand has smashed my idol into dust. I hae nae langer part interest nor portion in the concerns of this life; but only to sign ony paper that ye can devise, to restore their rights to the twa babies that my idolatry has made fatherless."

"I hope, in mercy, Mr Walkinshaw, that ye'll be comforted," said the worthy lawyer, deeply affected by his vehemence.

“ I hope so too, but I see na whar at present it’s to come frae,” replied Claud, bursting into tears, and weeping bitterly. “ But,” he added, “ I would fain, Mr Keelevin, be left to mysel—alack! alack! I hae been owre lang left to mysel. Hows-
ever, gang away the day, and remember Dr Denholm as ye pass;—but I’ll ne’er hae peace o’ mind till the paper’s made and signed; so, as a Christian, I beg you to make haste, for it will be a Samaritan’s act of charity.”

Mr Keelevin perceived that it was of no use at that time to offer any farther consolation, and he accordingly withdrew.

CHAP. VIII.

DURING the remainder of the day, after Mr Keelevin had left him, Claud continued to sit alone, and took no heed of any thing that occurred around him.—Dinner was placed on the table at the usual hour ; but he did not join Walter.

“ I won’er, father,” said the natural, as he was hewing at the joint, “ that ye’re no for ony dinner the day ; for ye ken if a’ the folk in the world were to die but only ae man, it would behove that man to hae his dinner.”

To this sage observation the grey-haired penitent made no reply ; and Walter finished his meal without attempting to draw him again into conversation.

In the afternoon Claud left his elbow chair, and walked slowly and heavily up

the path which led to the bench he had constructed on the rising ground, where he was so often in the practice of contemplating the lands of his forefathers; and on gaining the brow of the hill, he halted, and once more surveyed the scene. For a moment it would seem that a glow of satisfaction passed over his heart; but it was only a hectic flush, instantly succeeded by the nausea of moral disgust; and he turned abruptly round, and seated himself with his back towards the view which had afforded him so much pleasure. In this situation he continued some time, resting his forehead on his ivory-headed staff, and with his eyes fixed on the ground.

In the meantime, Mr Keelevin having called on the Reverend Dr Denholm, according to Claud's wish, to request he would visit him in the afternoon, the venerable minister was on his way to Grippy. On reaching the house, he was informed by one of the maid-servants, that her master had walked to his summer-seat on the hill,

whither he immediately proceeded, and found the old man still rapt in his moody and mournful meditations.

Claud had looked up, as he heard him approach, and pointing to the bench, beckoned him to be seated. For some time they sat together without speaking; the minister appearing to wait in expectation that the penitent would address him first; but observing him still disposed to continue silent, he at last said,—

“ Mr Keelevin told me, Mr Walkinshaw, that ye wished to see me under this dispensation with which the hand o’ a righteous Providence has visited your family.”

“ I’m greatly obligated to Mr Keelevin,” replied Claud, thoughtfully; “ he’s a frien’ly and a very honest man. It would hae been happy wi’ me the day, Dr Denholm, had I put mair confidence in him; but I doobt, I doobt, I hae been a’ my life a sore hypocrite.”

“ I was ay o’ that notion,” said the Re-

verend Doctor, not quite sure whether the contrition so humbly expressed was sincere or affected, but the meek look of resignation with which the desolate old man replied to the cutting sarcasm, moved the very heart of the chastiser with strong emotions of sympathy and grief; and he added, in his kindest manner,—

“But I hope, Mr Walkinshaw, I may say to you, ‘Brother, be of good cheer;’ for if this stroke, by which your first-born is cut off from the inheritance of the years that were in the promise of his winsome youth, is ta’en and borne as the admonition of the vanity of setting your heart on the things of carnal life, it will prove to you a great blessing for evermore.”

There was something in the words in which this was couched, that, still more painfully than the taunt, affected the disconsolate penitent, and he burst into tears, taking hold of the minister’s right hand graspingly with his left, saying, “Spare me, doctor! O spare me, an it be possible—

for the worm that never dieth hath coiled itsel within my bosom, and the fire that's never quenched is kindled around me—What an it be for ever?”

“Ye should na, Mr Walkinshaw,” replied the clergyman, awed by the energy and solemnity of his manner—“Ye should na entertain such desperate thoughts, but hope for better things; for it's a blithe thing for your precious soul to be at last sensible o' your own unworthiness.”

“Aye, doctor, but, alack for me! I was ay sensible o' that. I hae sinned wi' my e'en open, and I thought to mak up for't by a strict observance o' church ordinances.”

“'Deed, Mr Walkinshaw, there are few shorter roads to the pit than through the kirk-door; and many a Christian has been brought nigh to the death, thinking himself cheered and guided by the sound o' gospel preaching, when, a' the time, his ear was turned to the sough o' perdition.

“What shall I do to be saved?” said the old man, reverentially and timidly.

“Ye can do naething yoursel, Mr Walkinshaw,” replied the minister; and he proceeded, with the fearlessness of a champion and the energy of an apostle, to make manifest to his understanding the corruption of the human heart, and its utter unworthiness in the pure eyes of Him that alone can wash away the Ethiopian hue of original sin, and eradicate the Leopard spots of personal guilt.

While he spoke the bosom of Claud was convulsed—he breathed deeply and fearfully—his eyes glared—and the manner in which he held his hands, trembling and slightly raised, showed that his whole inward being was transfixed, as it were, with a horrible sense of some tremendous apocalypse.

“I fear, I fear, Doctor Denholm,” he exclaimed, “that I can hae no hope.”

The venerable pastor was struck with the despair of the expression, and, after a

short pause, said, “ Dinna let yoursel despond ; tak comfort in the mercy of God ; surely your life has na been blacken’t wi’ ony great crime ? ”

“ It has been one continued crime,” cried the penitent—“ frae the first hour that my remembrance can look back to, down to the vera last minute, there has been no break nor interruption in the constancy of my iniquity. I sold my soul to the Evil One in my childhood, that I might recover the inheritance of my forebears. O the pride of that mystery ! and a’ the time there was a voice within me that would na be pacified wi’ the vain promises I made to become another man, as soon as ever my conquest was complete.”

“ I see but in that,” said the pious Doctor, in a kind and consoling manner, “ I see but in a’ that, Mr Walkinshaw, an inordinate love of the world ; and noo that ye’re awakened to a sense of your danger, the Comforter will soon come. Ye hae ay been reputed an honest man, and no defi-

cient in your moral duties, as a husband, a parent, a master, and a friend."

Claud clasped his hands fervently together, exclaiming, "O God! thou hast ever seen my hypocrisy!—Dr Denholm," and he took him firmly by the hand;—"when I was but a bairn, I kent na what it was to hae the innocence o' a young heart. I used to hide the sma' presents of siller I got frae my frien's, even when Maudge Dobbie, the auld kind creature that brought me up, could na earn a sufficiency for our scrimpit meals; I did na gang near her when I kent she was in poortith and bedrid, for fear my heart would relent, and gar me gie her something out o' the gathering I was making for the redemption o' this vile yird that is mair grateful than me, for it repays with its fruits the care o' the tiller. I stifled the very sense o' loving kindness within me; and in furtherance of my wicked avarice, I married a woman—

Heaven may forgie the aversion I had to her ; but my own nature never can."

Dr Denholm held up his hands, and contemplated in silence the humbled and prostrate spirit that was thus proceeding with the frightful confession of its own baseness and depravity.

" But," cried the penitent, " I canna hope that ye're able to thole the sight that I would lay open in the inner sepulchre of my guilty conscience—for in a' my reprobation I had ever the right before me, when I deliberately preferred the wrang. The angel of the Lord ceased not, by night nor by day, to warsle for me ; but I clung to Baal, and spurned and kicked whenever the messenger of brightness and grace tried to tak me away."

The old man paused, and then looking towards the minister, who still continued silent, regarding him with compassionate amazement, said,—

" Doctor, what can I expek ?"

" O ! Mr Walkinshaw, but ye hae been

a doure sinner," was the simple and emphatic reply ; " and I hope that this sense o' the evil of your way is an admonition to a repentance that may lead you into the right road at last. Be ye, therefore, thankful for the warning ye hae now gotten of the power and the displeasure of God."

" Many a warning," said Claud, " in tokens sairer than the plagues o' Egypt, which but grieved the flesh, hae I had in the spirit; but still my heart was harden't till the destroying angel slew my first-born."

" Still I say, be thankful, Mr Walkinshaw ! ye hae received a singular manifestation of the goodness of God. Your son, we're to hope, is removed into a better world. He's exposed no more to the temptations of this life—a' care wi' him is past—a' sorrow is taken from him. It's no misfortune to die, but a great risk to be born ; and nae Christian should sorrow, like unto those who are without hope, when Death,

frae ahint the black yett, puts forth his ancient hand, and pulls in a brother or a sister by the skirts of the garment of flesh. The like o' that, Mr Walkinshaw, is nae-thing; but when, by the removal of a friend, we are taught to see the error of our way, it's a great thing for us—it's a blithe thing; and, therefore, I say unto you again, brother, be of good cheer, for in this temporal death of your son, may be the Lord has been pleased to bring about your own salvation."

"And what may be the token whereby I may venture to take comfort frae the hope?"

"There's nae surer sign gi'en to man than that token—when ye see this life but as a pilgrimage, then ye may set forward in your way rejoicing—when ye behold nothing in your goods and gear but trash and splendid dirt, then may ye be sure that ye hae gotten better than silver or gold—when ye see in your herds and flocks but fodder for a carnal creature like

the beasts that perish, then shall ye eat of the heavenly manna—when ye thirst to do good, then shall the rock be smitten, and the waters of life, flowing forth, will follow you wheresoever you travel in the wilderness of this world.”

The venerable pastor suddenly paused, for at that moment Claud laid aside his hat, and, falling on his knees, clasped his hands together, and looking towards the skies, his long grey hair flowing over his back, he said with awful solemnity, “ Father, thy will be done !—in the devastation of my earthly heart, I accept the eryl of thy service.”

He then rose with a serene countenance, as if his rigid features had undergone some benignant transformation. At that moment a distant strain of wild and holy music, rising from a hundred voices, drew their attention towards a shaggy bank of natural birch and hazel, where, on the sloping ground in front, they saw a number of Cameronians from Glasgow, and

the neighbouring villages, assembled to commemorate in worship the persecutions which their forefathers had suffered there for righteousness sake.

After listening till the psalm was finished, Claud and Dr Denholm returned towards the house, where they found Leddy Grippy had arrived. The old man, in order to avoid any unnecessary conversation, proposed that the servants should be called in, and that the Doctor should pray—which he did accordingly, and at the conclusion retired.

CHAP. IX.

ON Monday Claud rose early, and, without waiting for breakfast, or heeding the remonstrances of his wife on the risk he ran in going afield fasting, walked to Glasgow, and went directly to the house of his mother-in-law, the aged Leddy Plealands, now considerably above fourscore. The natural delicacy of her constitution had received so great a shock from the death of Charles, that she was unable that morning to leave her room. Having, however, brought home with her the two orphans, until after the funeral, their grandfather found them playing in the parlour, and perhaps he was better pleased to meet with them than had she been there herself.

Although they knew him perfectly, yet the cold and distant intercourse which arose from his estrangement towards their father, had prevented them from being on those terms of familiarity which commonly subsist between children and their grandfathers ; and when they saw him enter the room, they immediately left their toys on the floor, and, retiring to a corner, stood looking at him timidly, with their hands behind.

The old man, without seeming to notice their innocent reverence, walked to a chair near the window, and sat down. His demeanour was as calm, and his features as sedate, as usual, but his eyes glittered with a slight sprinkling of tears, and twice or thrice he pressed his elbows into his sides, as if to restrain some inordinate agitation of the heart. In the course of a few minutes he became quite master of himself, and, looking for a short time compassionately at the children, he invited them to come to him. Mary, the girl, who was

the youngest, obeyed at once the summons; but James, the boy, still kept back.

“What for wilt t’ou no come to me?” said Claud.

“I’ll come, if ye’ll no hurt me,” replied the child. “Hurt thee! what for, poor thing, should I hurt thee?” inquired his grandfather, somewhat disturbed by the proposed condition.

“I dinna ken,” said the boy, still retreating,—“but I am feart, for ye hurt papa for naething, and mamma used to greet for’t.”

Claud shuddered, and in the spasmodic effort which he made to suppress his emotion, he unconsciously squeezed the little hand of the girl so hardly, as he held her between his knees, that she shrieked with the pain, and flew towards her brother, who, equally terrified, ran to shelter himself behind a chair.

For some time the old man was so much affected, that he felt himself incap-

able of speaking to them. But he said to himself,—

“ It is fit that I should endure this. I sowed tares, and mauna expek wheat.”

The children, not finding themselves angrily pursued, began to recover courage, and again to look at him.

“ I did na mean to hurt thee, Mary,” said he, after a short interval. “ Come, and we’ll mak it up ;”—and, turning to the boy, he added, “ I’m very wae that e’er I did ony wrang to your father, my bonny laddie, but I’ll do sae nae mair.”

“ That’s cause ye canna help it,” replied James boldly, “ for he’s dead—he’s in a soun’ soun’ sleep—nobody but an angel wi’ the last trumpet at his vera lug is able to waken him—and Mary and me, and mamma—we’re a’ gaun to lie down and die too, for there’s nobody now in the world that cares for us.”

“ I care for you, my lambie, and I’ll be kind to you ; I’ll be as kind as your father.”

It would appear that these words had been spoken affectionately, for the little girl, forgetful of her hurt, returned, and placed herself between his knees ; but her brother still stood aloof.

“ But will ye be kind to mamma ?” said the boy, with an eager and suspicious look.

“ That I will,” was the answer. “ She’ll ne’er again hae to blame me—nor hae reason to be sorrowful on my account.”

“ But were nae ye ance papa’s papa ?” rejoined the child, still more suspiciously.

The old man felt the full force of all that was meant by these simple expressions, and he drew his hand hastily over his eyes to wipe away the rising tears.

“ And will ye never trust me ?” said he sorrowfully to the child, who, melted by the tone in which it was uttered, advanced two or three steps towards him.

“ Ay, if ye’ll say as sure’s death that ye’ll no hurt me.”

“ Then I do say as sure’s death,” ex-

claimed Claud fervently, and held out his hand, which the child, running forward, caught in his, and was in the same moment folded to his grandfather's bosom.

Leddy Plealands had, in the meantime, been told who was her visitor, and being anxious, for many reasons, to see him at this crisis, opened the door. Feeble, pale, and delicate, the venerable gentlewoman was startled at seeing a sight she so little expected, and stood several minutes with the door in her hand before she entered.

“ Come in,” said Claud to her—“ come in—I hae something to say to you anent thir bairns—Something maun be done for them and their mother; and I would fain tak counsel wi’ you concerning ’t. Bell Fatherlans is o’ oure frush a heart to thole wi’ the dinging and fyke o’ our house, or I would tak them a’ hame to Grippy; but ye maun devise some method wi’ her to mak their loss as light in worldly circumstances as my means will alloo; and whatsoever you and her ’gree

upon Mr Keelevin will see executed baith by deed and paction."

"Is't possible that ye're sincere, Mr Walkinshaw?" replied the old lady.

Claud made no answer, but, disconsolately, shook his head.

"This is a mercy past hope, if ye're really sincere."

"I am sincere," said the stern old man, severely; "and I speak wi' humiliation and contrition. I hae borne the rebuke of thir babies, and their suspicion has spoken sermons of reproaches to my cowed spirit and broken heart."

"What have ye done?" inquired the Lady, surprised at his vehemence—"what have ye done to make you speak in such a way, Mr Walkinshaw?"

"In an evil hour I was beguiled by the Moloch o' pride and ambition to disinherit their father, and settle a' my property on Watty, because he had the Plealands. But, from that hour, I hae never kent what comfort is, or amaist what it is to hope

for heavenly mercy. But I hae lived to see my sin, and I yearn to mak atonement. When that's done, I trust that I may be permitted to lay down my head, and close my een in peace."

Mrs Hypel did not well know what answer to make, the disclosure seemed to her so extraordinary, that she looked at Claud as if she distrusted what she heard, or was disposed to question the soundness of his mind.

"I see," he added, "that, like the orphans, ye dinna believe me; but, like them, Mrs Hypel, ye'll may be in time be wrought to hae compassion on a humbled and contrite heart. A', therefore, that I can say for the present is, consult wi' Bell, and confer wi' Mr Keelevin; he has full power frae me to do whatsoever he may think just and right; and what ye do, do quickly, for a heavy hand is on my shouther; and there's one before me in the shape o' my braw Charlie, that waves his hand, and beckons me to follow him."

The profound despondency with which

this was uttered overwhelmed the feelings of the old Lady ; even the children were affected, and, disengaging themselves from his arms, retired together, and looked at him with wonder and awe.

“ Will ye go and see their mother ? ” — said the lady, as he rose, and was moving towards the door. He halted, and for a few seconds appeared to reflect ; but suddenly looking round, he replied, with a deep and troubled voice, —

“ No. I hae been enabled to do mair than I ever thought it was in my power to do ; but I canna yet, — no, not this day, — I canna yet venture there. — I will, however, by and by. It’s a penance I maun dree, and I will go through it a’.”

And with these words he quitted the house, leaving the old gentlewoman and the children equally amazed, and incapable of comprehending the depth and mystery of a grief which, mournful as the immediate cause certainly was, undoubtedly partook in some degree of religious despair.

CHAP. X.

BETWEEN the interview described in the preceding chapter and the funeral, nothing remarkable appeared in the conduct of Claud. On the contrary, those habits of reserve and taciturnity into which he had fallen, from the date of the entail, were apparently renewed, and, to the common observation of the general eye, he moved and acted as if he had undergone no inward change. The domestics, however, began to notice, that, instead of the sharp and contemptuous manner which he usually employed in addressing himself to Walter, his voice was modulated with an accent of compassion,—and that, on the third day after the death of Charles, he, for the first time, caressed and fondled the affectionate natural's darling, Betty Bodle.

It might have been thought that this simple little incident would have afforded pleasure to her father, who happened to be out of the room, when the old man took her up in his arms; but so far from this being the case, the moment that Walter returned he ran towards him, and snatched the child away.

“What for do’st t’ou tak the bairn frae me sae frightenedly, Watty?” said Claud in a mild tone of remonstrance, entirely different from any thing he had ever before addressed to him.

Walter, however, made no reply, but retiring to a distant part of the room, carefully inspected the child, and frequently inquired where she was hurt, although she was laughing and tickled with his nursery-like proceedings.

“What gars t’ee think, Watty,” rejoined his father, “that I would hurt the wean?”

“’Cause I hae heard you wish that the Lord would tak the brat to himsel.”

“ An I did, Watty, it was nae ill wis.”

“ So I ken, or else the minister lies,” replied Walter ; “ but I would na like, for a’ that, to hae her sent till him ; and noo, as they say ye’re ta’en up wi’ Charlie’s bairns, I jealouse ye hae some end o’ your ain for rooketty-cooing wi’ my wee Betty Bodle. I canna understand this new kythed kindness,—so, gin ye like, father, we’ll just be fair gude e’en and fair gude day, as we were wont.”

This sank deeper into the wounded heart of his father than even the distrust of the orphans ; but the old man made no answer. Walter, however, observed him muttering something to himself, as he leant his head back, with his eyes shut, against the shoulder of the easy chair in which he was sitting ; and rising softly with the child in his arms, walked cautiously behind the chair, and bent forward to listen. But the words were spoken so inwardly and thickly, that nothing could be overheard. While in this position, the

little girl playfully stretched out her hand and seized her grandfather by the ear. Startled from his prayer or his reverie, Claud, yielding to the first impulse of the moment, turned angrily round at being so disturbed, and, under the influence of his old contemptuous regard for Watty, struck him a severe blow on the face,—but almost in the same instant, ashamed of his rashness, he shudderingly exclaimed, throbbing with remorse and vexation,—

“ Forgi’e me, Watty, for I know not what I do ;” and he added, in a wild ejaculation, “ Lord ! Lord ! O lighter, lighter lay the hand o’ thy anger upon me. The reed is broken—O, if it may stand wi’ thy pleasure, let it not thus be trampled in the mire ! But why should I supplicate for any favour ?—Lord of justice and of judgment, let thy will be done !”

Walter was scarcely more confounded by the blow than by these impassioned exclamations ; and hastily quitting the room, ran, with the child in his arms, to

his mother, who happened at the time, as was her wont, to be in the kitchen on household cares intent, crying,—

“ Mother! mother! my father’s gane by himsel; he’s aff at the head; he’s daft; and ta’en to the praising o’ the Lord at this time o’ day.”

But, excepting this trivial incident, nothing, as we have already stated, occurred between the interview with Leddy Plealands and the funeral to indicate, in any degree, the fierce combustion of distracted thoughts which was raging within the unfathomable caverns of the penitent’s bosom—all without, save but for this little effusion, was calm and stable. His external appearance was as we have sometimes seen Mount Etna in the sullenness of a wintry day, when the chaos and fires of its abyss uttered no sound, and an occasional gasp of vapour was heavily breathed along the grey and gloomy sky. Every thing was still and seemingly steadfast. The woods were silent in all their leaves;

the convents wore an awful aspect of unsocial solemnity; and the ruins and remains of former ages appeared as if permitted to moulder in unmolested decay. The very sea, as it rolled in a noiseless swell towards the black promontories of lava, suggested strange imageries of universal death, as if it had been the pall of the former world heavily moved by the wind. But that dark and ominous tranquillity boded neither permanence nor safety—the traveller and the inhabitant alike felt it as a syncope in nature, and dreaded an eruption or a hurricane.

Such was the serenity in which Claud passed the time till Saturday, the day appointed for the funeral. On the preceding evening his wife went into Glasgow to direct the preparations, and about noon he followed her, and took his seat, to receive the guests, at the door of the principal room arranged for the company, with James, the orphan, at his knee. Nothing uncommon passed for some time;

he went regularly through the ceremonial of assistant chief mourner, and in silence welcomed, by the customary shake of the hand, each of the friends of the deceased as they came in. When Dr Denholm arrived, it was observed that his limbs trembled, and that he held him a little longer by the hand than any other; but he too was allowed to pass on to his seat. After the venerable minister, Mr Keelevin made his appearance. His clothes were of an old-fashioned cut, such as even still may occasionally be seen at west country funerals among those who keep a special suit of black for the purpose of attending the burials of their friends; and the sort of quick eager look of curiosity which he glanced round the room, as he lifted his small cocked hat from off his white, well-powdered, ionic curled tie-wig, which he held firm with his left forefinger, provoked a smile, in despite of the solemnity of the occasion.

Claud grasped him impatiently by the

little girl playfully stretched out her hand and seized her grandfather by the ear. Startled from his prayer or his reverie, Claud, yielding to the first impulse of the moment, turned angrily round at being so disturbed, and, under the influence of his old contemptuous regard for Watty, struck him a severe blow on the face,—but almost in the same instant, ashamed of his rashness, he shudderingly exclaimed, throbbing with remorse and vexation,—

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hand, and drew him into a seat beside himself. "Hae ye made out the instrument?" said he.

"It's no just finished," replied Mr Keelevin; "but I was mindit to ca' on you the morn, though it's Sabbath, to let you see, for approbation, what I have thought might be sufficient."

"Ye ought to hae had it done by this time," said Claud, somewhat chidingly.

"'Deed should I," was the answer, "but ye ken the Lords are coming to the town next week, and I hae had to prepare for the defence of several unfortunate creatures."

"It's a judgment time indeed," said Claud; and, after a pause of several minutes, he added, "I would fain no be disturbed on the Lord's day, so ye need na come to Grippy, and on Monday morning I'll be wi' you betimes; I hope a' may be finished that day, for, till I hae made atonement, I can expek no peace o' mind."

Nothing farther was allowed at that

time to pass between them, for the bether-ils employed to carry round the services of bread and wine came in with their trays, and Deacon Gardner, of the Wrights, who had charge of the funeral, having nodded to the Reverend Dr John Hamilton, the minister of the Inner High Church, in the district of which the house was situated, the worthy divine rose, and put an end to all farther private whispering, by commencing the prayer.

When the regular in-door rites and ceremonies were performing, and the body had, in the meantime, been removed into the street, and placed on the shoulders of those who were to carry it to the grave, Claud took his grandson by the hand, and followed at the head, with a firmly knotted countenance, but with faltering steps.

In the procession to the church-yard no particular expression of feeling took place ; but when the first shovelful of earth rattled hollowly on the coffin, the little boy, who still held his grandfather by the fin-

ger, gave a shriek, and ran to stop the grave-digger from covering it up. But the old man softly and composedly drew him back, telling him it was the will of God, and that the same thing must be done to every body in the world.

“And to me too?” said the child, inquiringly and fearfully.

“To a’ that live,” replied his grandfather; and the earth being, by this time, half filled in, he took off his hat, and looking at the grave for a moment, gave a profound sigh, and again covering his head, led the child home.

CHAP. XI.

IMMEDIATELY after the funeral Claud returned home to Grippy, where he continued during the remainder of the day secluded in his bed-chamber. Next morning, being Sunday, he was up and dressed earlier than usual; and after partaking slightly of breakfast, he walked into Glasgow, and went straight to the house of his daughter-in-law.

The widow was still in her own room, and not in any state or condition to be seen; but the children were dressed for church, and when the bells began to ring, he led them out, each holding him by the hand, innocently proud of their new black clothes.

In all the way up the High Street, and down the pathway from the church-yard

gate to the door of the cathedral, he never raised his eyes ; and during the sermon he continued in the same apparent state of stupor. In retiring from the church, the little boy drew him gently aside from the path to show his sister the spot where their father was laid ; and the old man, absorbed in his own reflections, was unconsciously on the point of stepping on the grave, when James checked him,—

“ It’s papa—dinna tramp on him.”

Aghast and recoiling, as if he had trodden upon an adder, he looked wildly around, and breathed quickly and with great difficulty, but said nothing. In an instant his countenance underwent a remarkable change—his eyes became glittering and glassy, and his lips white. His whole frame shook, and appeared under the influence of some mortal agitation. His presence of mind did not, however, desert him, and he led the children hastily home. On reaching the door, he gave them in to the servant that opened it

without speaking, and went immediately to Grippy, where, the moment he had seated himself in his elbow chair, he ordered one of the servants to go for Mr Keelevin.

“ What ails you, father ?” said Walter, who was in the room at the time ; “ ye speak unco drumly—hae ye bitten your tongue ?” But scarcely had he uttered these words, when the astonished creature gave a wild and fearful shout, and, clasp- ing his hands above his head, cried, “ Help ! help ! something’s riving my fa- ther in pieces !”

The cry brought in the servants, who, scarcely less terrified, found the old man smitten with a universal paralysis, his mouth and eyes dreadfully distorted, and his arms powerless.

In the alarm and consternation of the moment, he was almost immediately de- serted ; every one ran in quest of medical aid. Walter alone remained with him, and continued gazing in his face with a

strange horror, which idiocy rendered terrific.

Before any of the servants returned, the violence of the shock seemed to subside, and he appeared to be sensible of his situation. The moment that the first entered the room he made an effort to speak, and the name of Keelevin was two or three times so distinctly articulated, that even Walter understood what he meant, and immediately ran wildly to Glasgow for the lawyer. Another messenger was dispatched for the Leddy, who had, during the forenoon, gone to her daughter-in-law, with the intention of spending the day.

In the meantime a Doctor was procured, but he seemed to consider the situation of the patient hopeless ; he, however, as in all similar cases, applied the usual stimulants to restore energy, but without any decisive effect.

The weather, which had all day been lowering and hazy, about this time be-

came drizzly, and the wind rose, insomuch that Leddy Grippy, who came flying to the summons, before reaching home was drenched to the skin, and was for some time, both from her agitation and fatigue, incapable of taking any part in the bustle around her husband.

Walter, who had made the utmost speed for Mr Keelevin, returned soon after his mother; and, on appearing before his father, the old man eagerly spoke to him; but his voice was so thick, that few of his words were intelligible. It was, however, evident that he inquired for the lawyer; for he threw his eyes constantly towards the door, and several times again was able to articulate his name.

At last, Mr Keelevin arrived on horseback, and came into the room, dressed in his trotcosey; the hood of which, over his cocked hat, was drawn so closely on his face, that but the tip of his sharp aquiline nose was visible. But, forgetful or regardless of his appearance, he stalked with long

strides at once to the chair where Claud was sitting; and taking from under the skirt of the trotcosey a bond of provision for the widow and children of Charles, and for Mrs Milrookit, he knelt down, and began to read it aloud.

“ Sir,” said the Doctor, who was standing at the other side of the patient, “ Mr Walkinshaw is in no condition to understand you.”

Still, however, Mr Keelevin read on; and when he had finished, he called for pen and ink.

“ It is impossible that he can write,” said the Doctor.

“ Ye hae no business to mak ony sic observation,” exclaimed the benevolent lawyer. “ Ye shou’d say nothing till we try. In the name of justice and mercy, is there nobody in this house that will fetch me pen and ink ?”

It was evident to all present that Claud perfectly understood what his friend said; and his eyes betokened eagerness and satis-

faction ; but the expression with which his features accompanied the assent in his look was horrible and appalling.

At this juncture Leddy Grippy came rushing, half dressed, into the room, her dishevelled grey hair flying loosely over her shoulders, exclaiming,—

“ What’s wrang noo?—what new judgment has befallen us?—Whatna fearfu’ image is that like a corpse out o’ a tomb, that’s making a’ this rippet for the cheat-rie instruments o’ pen and ink, when a dying man is at his last gasp?”

“ Mrs Walkinshaw, for Heaven’s sake be quiet;—your gudeman,” replied Mr Keelevin, opening the hood of his trocosey, and throwing it back ; taking off, at the same time, his cocked hat—“ Your gudeman kens very weel what I hae read to him. It’s a provision for Mrs Charles and her orphans.”

“ But is there no likewise a provision in’t for me?” cried the Leddy.

“ O, Mrs Walkinshaw, we’ll speak o’ that

hereafter ; but let us get this executed aff hand,” replied Mr Keelevin. “ Ye see your gudeman kens what we’re saying, and looks wistfully to get it done. I say, in the name of God, get me pen and ink.”

“ Ye’s get neither pen nor ink here, Mr Keelevin, till my rights are cognost in a record o’ sederunt and session.”

“ Hush !” exclaimed the Doctor—all was silent, and every eye turned on the patient, whose countenance was again hideously convulsed ;—a troubled groan struggled and heaved for a moment in his breast, and was followed by short quivering through his whole frame.

“ It is all over !” said the Doctor. At these words the Leddy rushed towards the elbow chair, and, with frantic cries and gestures, flew on the body, and acted an extravagance of sorrow ten times more outrageous than grief. Mr Keelevin stood motionless, holding the paper in his hand ; and, after contemplating the spectacle before him for about two or three minutes,

shook his head disconsolately, and replacing his cocked hat, drew the hood of the trocosey again over his face, and left the house.

CHAP. XII.

As soon as the nature of the settlement which Claud had made of his property was known, Leddy Plealands removed Mrs Charles and the children to her own house, and earnestly entreated her daughter the Leddy, who continued to reside at Grippy, managing the household cares there as usual, to exert her influence with Walter to make some provision for his unfortunate relations. Even George, who, engrossed by his business and his own family, cared almost as little as any man for the concerns of others, felt so ashamed of his father's conduct, that, on the Sunday after the funeral, he went to pay a visit of condolence to his mother, and to join his exhortations to hers, in the hope that

something might be done. But Walter was inexorable.

“ If my father,” said he, “ did sic a wicked thing to Charlie as ye a’ say, what for would ye hae me to do as ill and as wrang to my bairn? Is na wee Betty Bodle my first-born, and, by course o’ nature and law, she has a right to a’ I hae; what for then would ye hae me to mak away wi’ ony thing that pertains to her? I’ll no be guilty o’ ony sic sin.”

“ But you know, Walter,” replied George, “ that our father did intend to make some provision both for Mrs Charles her family and our sister, and it’s really a disgrace to us all if nothing be done for them. It was but a chance that the bond of provision was na signed.”

“ Ye may say sae, Geordie, in your cracks at the Yarn Club, o’er the punch-bowl, but I think it was the will o’ Providence; for, had it been ordain’t that Bell Fatherlans and her weans were to get a part o’ father’s gear, they would hae

gotten't. But ye saw the Lord took him to Abraham's bosom before the bond was signed, which was a clear proof and testimony to me, that it does na stand wi' the pleasure o' Heaven that she should get ony thing. She'll get nothing frae me."

"But," again interposed George, "if you will do nothing in consideration of our father's intention, you ought in charity to think of her distress."

"Charity begins at hame, Geordie, and wha kens but I may be brought to want if I dinna tak care?"

"I'm sure," replied the merchant, sharply, "that many a one has who less deserved it."

"How do ye ken what I deserve?" cried the natural, offended. "It's speaking ill o' the understanding o' Providence, to say I dinna deserve what it has gi'en me. I'm thinking, Geordie, Providence kens my deserts muckle better than you."

Leddy Grippy, who, during this conversation, was sitting at the table, in all

the pomp of her new widow's weeds, with the big Bible before her, in which she was trying to read that edifying chapter, the tenth of Nehemiah, here interposed.

"Wheesht, wheesht, Watty, and dinna blaspheme," said she; "and no be overly condumacious. Ye ken your father was a good man, and nothing but the dart o' death prevented him frae making a handsome provision for a' his family, forbye you; and no doubt, when ye hae gotten the better o' the sore stroke o' the sudden removal of the golden candlestick o' his life from among us, ye'll do every thing in a rational and just manner."

"'Deed I'll do nae sic things, mother," was the reply; "I'm mindit to haud the grip I hae gotten."

"But ye're a Christian, Watty," resumed the Leddy, still preserving her well put on mourning equanimity, "and it behoves you to reflek, that a' in your power is gi'en to you but as a steward."

"Ye need na tell me that; but wha's

steward am I? Is na the matter a trust for my bairn? I'm wee Betty Bodle's steward, and no man shall upbraid me wi' being unfaithfu'," replied Walter.

"Aye, aye, Watty, that's very true in a sense," said she, "but whosoever giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord."

"That's what I canna comprehend; for the Lord has no need to borrow; he can make a world o' gold for the poor folk, if he likes, and if he keeps them in poortith, he has his ain reasons for't."

"Ah, weel I wat!" exclaimed the Leddy pathetically; "noo I fin' to my cost, that my cousin, Ringan Gilhaise, the Mauchlin maltster, had the rights o't when he plea't my father's will, on account of thy concos montis; and, but for auld pawky Keelevin, he would hae gotten the property that's sae ill waur't on thee."

All this, however, made no impression; but George, in walking back to Glasgow, several times thought of what had fallen from his mother respecting the attempt

which had been made to set aside her father's settlement, on the score of Walter's idiocy ; and once or twice it occurred to him that the thing was still not impracticable, and that, being next heir of entail, and nearest male relative, it might be of advantage to his own family to get the management of the estate. Thus, by a conversation intended to benefit the disinherited heirs, the seed was sown of new plans and proceedings, worthy of the father's son. From that period, George took no farther interest in the affairs of his sister-in-law, but his visits became unusually frequent to Grippy, and he was generally always attended by some friend, whom he led into conversation with his brother, calculated to call forth the least equivocal disclosures of the state of Walter's mind.

But whatever were his motives for these visits, and this kind of conduct, he kept them close within his own breast. No one suspected him of any sinister design, but many applauded his filial attentions to

his mother ; for so his visits were construed, and they were deemed the more meritorious on account of the state of his own family, his wife, after the birth of her twin daughters, having fallen into ill health. Indeed, he was in general contemplated with sentiments of compassion and respect. Every body had heard of his anxiety, on the death of his father, to procure some provision for his deceased brother's family, and sympathised with the regret which he expressed at finding Walter so niggardly and intractable ; for not a word was breathed of his incapacity. The increased thoughtfulness and reserve of his manner which began, we may say, from the conversation quoted, was in consequence attributed to the effect of his comfortless domestic situation, and the public sympathy was considerably augmented, when, in the course of the same year in which his father died, he happened to lose one of his daughters.

There were, however, among his friends,

as there are always about most men, certain shrewd and invidious characters, and some among them did not give him credit for so much sensibility as their mutual acquaintance in common parlance ascribed to him. On the contrary, they openly condemned his indelicacy, in so often exposing the fooleries of his brother ; and those who had detected the well hidden sordid meanness of his disposition, wondered that he had so quietly acquiesced in Walter's succession. But they had either forgotten, or had never heard of, the circumstance to which his mother alluded with respect to her relation, the Mauchlin maltster's attempt to invalidate her father's will, and, of course, were not aware of the address requisite to prove the incapacity of a man whose situation had been already investigated, and who, by a solemn adjudication, was declared in the full possession of all his faculties. Their wonderment was not, however, allowed to continue long, for an event, which took place within a little more

than three months after the death of his daughter, ended all debates and controversies on the subject.

CHAP. XIII.

DEATH, it is said, rarely enters a house without making himself familiar to the inmates. Walter's daughter, a premature child, had from her birth been always infirm and delicate. In the course of the spring after her grandfather's death, she evidently grew worse, and towards the end of summer it was the opinion of all who saw her that she could not live long. The tenderness and solicitude of her father knew no bounds. She was, indeed, the sole object that interested him in life ; he doated over her with the most single and entire affection ; and when she died, he would not believe, nor allow himself to think, she had expired, but sat by the bedside, preserving silence, and preventing her from being touched, lest it should awaken her

from a slumber which he fondly imagined was to establish her recovery. No inducement could be contrived to draw him from his vigilant watch, nor by any persuasion could permission be obtained to dress her corpse. George, in the meanwhile, called several times at the house, and took occasion, in going there one day, to ask the Reverend Doctor Denholm to accompany him, under the pretext that perhaps he might prevail with Walter to allow the body to be removed, as it was beginning to grow offensive. But, when they reached the house, Walter was missing—he had suddenly and unobserved quitted the room where the corpse lay, and his mother, availing herself of his absence, was busily preparing for the interment.

They waited some time in expectation of his return, believing he had only walked into the fields, in consequence of the air of the chamber having become intolerable ; but, after conversing upwards of an hour on general topics, some anxiety began to

be expressed for his appearance, and his mother grew so alarmed, that servants were dispatched in all directions in quest of him. They had not, however, proceeded far, when he was met on the Glasgow road, coming with his niece Mary in his arms, followed by Leddy Plealands' maid-servant, loudly remonstrating with him for carrying off the child, and every now and then making an attempt to snatch it from his arms.

“What hae ye been about?” cried his mother, as she saw him approaching towards the house. He, however, made no answer; but, carrying the child into the nursery, he immediately stripped it naked, and dressed her in the clothes of his own daughter, caressing and pleasing her with a thousand fond assurances—calling her his third Betty Bodle, and betraying all the artless delight and satisfaction with which a child regards a new toy.

Dr Denholm, happening to be among those who wondered that his brother had

permitted him to succeed his father unmolested, and on seeing this indisputable proof of idiocy according to the notions of society, said,—

“ I canna refrain, Mr George, from telling you, that I think it's no right to alloo such a fine property as your father left, to be exposed to wastrie and ruination in the possession of such a haverel. It's neither doing justice to the world nor to your ain family ; and I redde you look about you—for wha kens what he may do next ?”

Such an admonition, the involuntary incitement of the moment, was not lost. George had, in fact, been long fishing for something of the kind, but nothing had occurred to provoke so explicit an opinion of Walter's obvious incapacity. He, however, replied cautiously,—

“ Some allowance, Doctor, must be made for the consternation of his sorrow ; and ye should know that it's a kittle point of law to determine when a man has or has not his sufficient senses.”

“ ‘Deed, Dr Denholm,” added Lady Grippy, who happened to be present,—
“ what ye say is very true ; for I can ne’er abide to think that Watty’s as he ought to be, since he refus’t to make good his honest father’s kind intents to the rest o’ the family. Here am I toiling and moiling frae morning to night for his advantage ; and would ye believe me, Doctor, when I tell you, that he’ll no alloo a black bawbee for any needful outlay ? and I’m obligated to tak frae my ain jointure money to pay the cost o’ every thing the house stands in need of.”

“ Not possible !” said George, with every indication of the sincerest astonishment.

“ Whether it’s possible, or whether it’s probable, I ken best mysel,” replied the Leddy ;—“ and this I ken likewise, that what I say is the even-down truth ; and nae farther gain than Mononday was eight days, I paid Deacon Paul, the Glasgow mason, thirteen shillings, a groat, and a bawbee, for the count o’ his sklater that

pointed the skews o' the house at Martinmas ; and though I would supplicate, an it were on my knees, like Queen Esther, the doure Ahasuerus, that he is, has no mercy. Indeed, I'll be nane surprised gin he leaves me to pay a' the charge o' his bairn's burial, which will be a black shame if he does."

"This must not be endured," said George, gravely ; " and I am surprised, mother, ye never spoke of such treatment before. I cannot sit patient and hear that ye're used in such a cruel and unnatural manner."

" It would be a blot on your character, Mr George," rejoined the minister, " if ye did. Your brother has been from his youth upward an evident idiot ; and ever since the death of his wife, ony little wit he had has been daily growing less."

" What ye say, Doctor," resumed the Leddy, " is no to be controverted ; for, poor lad, he certainly fell intil a sore melancholic at that time ; and it's my conceit he has ne'er rightly got the better o't ; for he was

—hegh, sirs!—he was till that time the kindest o’ a’ my bairns ; but, frae the day and hour that his wife took her departel in childbed, he has been a changed creature. Ye’ll mind how outstrapolous and constipated he was at her burial ; and it’s wi’ a heavy heart that I maun say’t, when his kind father, soon after, wanted to mak a will and testament to keep us a’ right and comfortable, he was just like to burn the house aboon our heads wi’ his condu-macity.”

“ I am well aware of the truth of much that you have said ; but it’s a painful thing for a man to think of taking steps against the capacity of his brother,” replied George. “ For, in the event of not succeeding, he must suffer great obloquy in the opinion of the world ; and you know that, with respect to Walter, the attempt was once made already.”

“ And every body said,” cried the Lady, “ that, but for the devices of auld draughty Keelevin, he would hae been

proven as mad as a March hare ; and nae doubt, as he kens how he jookit the law afore, he might be o' an instrumentality were the thing to gang to a revisidendo. No that I would like to see my bairn put into bedlam ; at the same time, Dr Denholm, I would na be doing a Christian and a parent's part to the lave o' my family, an I were to mak a mitigation against it."

" I do not think," replied George, looking inquiringly at the Reverend Doctor—" that when a man is proved incapable of conducting his affairs, it is necessary to confine him."

" O, no ; not at all, Mr George," was the unsuspecting minister's answer. " It would mak no odds to your brother ; it would only oblige you to take the management of the estate."

" That," replied George, " would be far from convenient, for the business of the counting-house requires my whole attention. Ye can have no notion, Dr Denholm, how much this rebellion in America

has increased the anxieties of merchants. At the same time, I would be greatly wanting in duty and respect towards my mother, were I to allow her to remain any longer in such an unhappy state, to say nothing of the manifest injustice of obliging her to lay out her own proper jointure in repairs and other expences of the house."

Little more passed at that time on the subject; but, in the course of walking back to Glasgow, George was fortified in his intentions by the conversation of the Doctor—or, what is, perhaps, more correct, he appeared so doubtful and scrupulous, that the guileless pastor thought it necessary to argue with him against allowing his delicacy to carry him too far.

CHAP. XIV.

AFTER the minister and George had left the house, the cares, we should say the enjoyments, of the Leddy were considerably increased, when she had leisure to reflect on the singular transaction by which Walter had supplied himself with another child. What with the requisite preparations for the funeral of his daughter next day, and "this new income," as she called the adopted orphan, "that, in itself, was a handling little short o' a birth," she had not, from the death of her husband, found herself half so earnestly occupied as on this sorrowful occasion. The house rung with her admonitions to the servants, and her short quick steps, in consequence of walking with old shoes down the heel, clattered as cleverly as her tongue. But all this

bustle and prodigality of anxieties suffered a sudden suspension, by the arrival of Mrs Charles Walkinshaw, in quest of her child. The little girl, however, was by this time so delighted with the fondling and caresses of her uncle, that she was averse to return home with her mother.

“ I won’er,” said Leddy Grippy, “ how ane in your straitened circumstance, Bell Fatherlans, canna be thankfu’ for sic a gratus amous as this. Watty’s a kind-hearted creature, and ye may be sure that neither scaith nor scant will be alloo’t to come near the wean while it stays in this house. For my part, I think his kidnapping her has been nothing less than an instigation o’ Providence, since he would na be constrained, by any reason or understanding, to settle an aliment on you.”

“ I cannot, however, part with my child to him. You know there are many little peculiarities about Mr Walter that do not exactly fit him for taking charge of children.”

“ But, since he’s willing to bear the cost and charge o’ her,” said the Leddy, “ ye should mak no objek, but conform ; for ye ken, I’ll hae the direction o’ her edication ; and am sure ye would na wis to see her any better brought up than was our Meg, Mrs Milrookit, who could once play seven tunes and a march on the spinet, and sewed a satin piece, at Embrough, of Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit under the tree of life ;—the like of which had na before been seen in a’ this kintra side. In short, Bell, my dear, it’s my advice to you to let the lassie bide wi’ us ; for, unless Watty is put out o’ the way, it may prove a great thing baith for her and you ; for he’s a most conomical creature ; and the siller he’ll save belyve will be just a portion.”

“ What do you mean,” replied the young widow, eagerly, “ about putting him out of the way ?”

“ Ah ! Bell Fatherlans,” exclaimed the Leddy, in her most pathetic manner ;—

“little ken ye yet what it is to hae a family. This has, indeed, been a house o’ mourning the day, even though we had na a body in it waiting for interment. The minister has been here wi’ Geordie, and it’s his solid opinion—we a’ ken what a man o’ lair and judgment Dr Denholm is;—he thinks that Watty’s no o’ a faculty to maintain the salvation of the family property; and when your gudebrother heard how I hae been used, he said, that neither law nor justice should oblige him to let his mother live any longer in this house o’ bondage and land o’ Egypt; so that, when we get the wean put aneath the ground, there aiblins will be some terrogation as to the naturality of Watty’s capacity, which, ye may be sure, is a most sore heart to me, his mother, to hear tell o’. But if it’s the Lord’s will, I maun submit; for really, in some things, Watty’s no to be thol’t; yet, for a’ that, Bell, my dear, I would let him tak his own way wi’ your bairn, till we see what’s to be the upshot. For, and though

I maun say it, who is his parent, that it canna be weel denied, that he's a thought daft by course o' nature ; he may, nevertheless, be decreetit douce enough by course o' law. Therefore, it's neither for you nor me to mak or meddle in the matter ; but gather the haws afore the snaws, betide whatever may betide."

We cannot venture to say that Mrs Charles Walkinshaw was exactly what we should call surprised at this information. She knew enough of the characters of her mother-in-law and of George, to hear even more extraordinary communications from the former unmoved. We need scarcely add, however, that the Leddy's argument was not calculated with her to produce the effect intended ; on the contrary, she said,—

" What you tell me only serves to convince me of the impropriety I should be guilty of in leaving my child with Walter."

But their conversation was interrupted

at this juncture by the entrance of Walter, leading Mary.

“ I’m come,” said he, “ Bell Fatherlans, to tell you that ye’re to gang away hame, and bring Jamie here to stay wi’ us. The house is big enough to haud us a’, and it’ll be a grand ploy to my mother—for ye ken she has such a heart for a thrangerie butt and ben, that, rather than want wark, she’ll mak a baby o’ the beetle, and dance til’t, cracking her thumbs, and singing,

Dance to your deddie, my bonny leddie ;
 Jink through the reelie ; jook round and wheelie ;
 Bob in the setting, my bonny lamb ;
 And ye’s get a slicie o’ a dishie nicie—
 Red cheekit apples and a mutton ham.

So just gang hame at ance, Bell, and bring your laddie, and we’ll a’ live thegither, and rookettycoo wi’ ane anither like doos in a doocot.”

But although Leddy Grippy certainly did like a bustle with all her heart and spirit, she had still that infirmity which ever belongs to human nature gifted with

similar propensities,—namely, a throbbing apprehension at the idea of it, such as mankind in general suffer in the prospect of enjoying pleasure; and the expression of this feeling with her took commonly the form and language of repugnance and reluctance, yea sometimes it even amounted to refusal.

“What say ye?” cried she to Walter, under a strong impression of it at the moment,—“are ye utterly bereav’t o’ your senses, to speak o’ bringing the lade o’ another family on my hands?”

“I’m sure,” was his answer, “if ye dinna like to tak the pleasure o’t, ye’re free to set up your jointure house, and live the life o’ dowager duchess, for me, mother. But Bell Fatherlans and her bairns are to come here,—for this is my house, ye ken—settlet on me and mine, past a’ power o’ law, by my father—and what’s my ain I’ll mak my ain.”

“Wha would hae thought o’ sic out-coming o’ kindness as this!” replied the

Leddy. "I fancy, Bell, ye'll hae to come and resident wi' us?"

"An she does na," said Walter, "I'll gang away where never one kent me, and tak her wee Mary on my back in a basket, like Jenny Nettles—that's what I will; so put the matter to your knee and straight it."

"I'll mak a bargain, Mr Walter," replied Mrs Charles,—“I'll leave Mary to-night, and come, after the burial to-morrow, with James, and stay a few days.”

"Ye'll stay a' your days," exclaimed Walter; "and as ye're a ledddy o' mair genteelity than my mother, ye shall hae the full rule and power o' the house, and mak jam and jelly;—a' the cast o' her grace and skill gangs nae farther than butter and cheese."

His mother was confounded, and unable for some time to utter a word. At last, putting her hands firmly into her sides, she said,—

"My word, but thou's no blate. But

it's no worth my while to gang intil a passion for a born idiot. Your reign, my lad, 's no ordaint to be lang, if there's either law or gospel among the fifteen at Embro. To misliken his mother ! to misuse me as I were nae better than an auld bachle, and, in a manner, to turn me out the house !”

“ O don't disturb yourself,” interposed Mrs Charles ; “ they were but words of course. You know his humour, and need not be surprised at what he says.”

The indignant mother was not, however, soon appeased,—her wrath for some time burnt fiercely, and it required no little dexterity on the part of her daughter-in-law to allay the altercation which ensued ; but in the end her endeavours proved successful, and the result was an arrangement, that the child should be left for a day or two, to ascertain whether Walter's attachment was dictated by caprice or a transfer of his affections. And in order to preserve quiet, and to prevent any extravagance that might be injurious

to the little girl, it was also arranged that her mother and brother should likewise spend a few weeks at Grippy.

CHAP. XV.

THE news of the arrangement, when communicated to Doctor Denholm and George, at the funeral next day, produced on them very opposite effects. The minister, who was naturally of a warm and benevolent disposition, persuaded himself that the proposal of Walter, to receive his sister-in-law and her family, was dictated by a sense of duty and of religion, and regretted that he had so hastily expressed himself so strongly respecting his incapacity. Indeed, every one who heard the story put upon it nearly the same sort of construction, and applauded the uncouth kindness of the natural as brotherly and Christian.

George, however, saw it, perhaps, more correctly ; but he was exceedingly disturb-

ed by the favourable impression which it made on the minds of his acquaintance, and hesitated to indulge his desire to obtain the management of the estate. But still he continued his visits to Grippy, and took every opportunity of drawing the attention of his friends to the imbecility of his brother. Nothing, however, occurred to further his wishes till the term of Martinmas after the incident mentioned in the foregoing chapter ; when, on receiving his rents, he presented his sister-in-law with a ten pound note, at the same time counting out, to the calculation of a half-penny, the balance he owed his mother of her jointure, but absolutely refusing to repay her any of the money she had, in the meantime, disbursed for different little household concerns and repairs, saying, that all she had laid out was nothing in comparison to what she was due for bed and board. This was the unkindest cut of all ; for she justly and truly estimated her services to him as of far more value.

However, she said nothing ; but next day, on the pretext of going to see her mother, who was now very infirm, and unable to quit her chamber, she went to Glasgow and called on George, to whom she made a loud and long complaint of the insults she had received, and of the total unfitness and unworthiness of his brother to continue uncontrolled in the possession of the estate.

George sympathized with her sorrows and her sufferings like a dutiful son, and comforted her with the assurance that he would lose no time in taking some steps for her relief, and the preservation of the property. And, as she consented to remain that day to dinner, it was thought, considering the disposition Walter had shown to squander his gifts on his sister-in-law, without any consideration for the rest of the family, it might be as well to consult Mr Keelevin on the occasion. A message was, accordingly, dispatched to the honest lawyer, begging him to call after dinner ; in short, every demonstration was

made by George to convince his mother how much better her worth was appreciated by him than by his brother;—and she was not only consoled, but delighted with the sincerity of his attentions.

In due time Mr Keelevin made his appearance; and the Leddy began a strong representation of all the indignities which she had endured, but her son softly and mildly interposed, saying,—

“It is of no use, my dear mother, to trouble Mr Keelevin with these things; he knows the infirmities of Walter as well as we do. No doubt,” he added, turning to the lawyer, “you have heard of the very extraordinary manner in which my brother took Mrs Charles and her family to Grippy.”

“I really,” replied the honest-hearted man, “had no idea that he possessed so muckle feeling and common sense, but I was very happy to hear’t. For, his own wean being no more, I’m sure he can do nothing better than make up to the dis-

inherited orphans some portion of that which, but for your father's sudden death, would hae been provided for them."

George knew not what reply to make to this ; but his mother, who, like the rest of her sex, had an answer for all subjects and occasions ever ready, said,—

"It's weel to ca't sense and feeling, but if I were obligated to speak the truth, I would baptize it wi' another name. It's na to be rehearsed by the tongue o' man, Mr Keelevin, what I hae borne at the hands of the haverel idiot, since the death of him that's awa—your auld friend, Mr Keelevin ;—he was a man of a capacity, and had he been spared a comfort to me, as he was, and aye sae couthy wi' his kindness, I would na kent what it is to be a helpless widow. But surely there maun be some way o' remedde for us a' in thir straits? It's no possible that Walter can be alloo't to riot and ravage in sic a most rabiator-like manner ; for I need na tell you, that he's gane beyond all coun-

sel and admonition. Noo, do ye think, Mr Keelevin, by your knowledge and skill in law, that we can get him cognost, and the rents and rule o' the property ta'en out of his hands? for, if he gangs on at the gait he's going, I'll be herri't, and he'll no leave himself ae bawbee to rub on anither."

"What has he done?" inquired the lawyer, a little thoughtfully.

"Done! what has he no done? He gied Bell Fatherlans a ten pound note, and was as dour as a smith's vice in the grip, when I wantit him to refund me a pour o' ready money that I was obligated to lay out for the house."

George, who had watched the lawyer's countenance in the meantime, said,—

"I doubt, mother, few will agree in thinking of that in the way you do. My sister-in-law stands in need of his kindness, but your jointure is more than you require; for, after all your terrible outlays," and he smiled to Mr Keelevin as he said the words, "you have already saved money."

“But what’s that to him?” exclaimed the Leddy. “Is nae a just debt a just debt—was na he bound to pay what I paid for him—and is’t no like a daft man and an idiot, to say he’ll no do’t? I’m sure, Mr Keelevin, I need na tell you that Wat-ty was ne’er truly concos montes. How ye got him made sound in his intellectuals when the law plea was about my father’s will, ye ken best yoursel; but the strae-mash that was thereanent is a thing to be remembered.”

Mr Keelevin gave a profound sigh, adding, in a sort of apologetic manner,—

“But Walter has maybe undergone some change since that time?”

“Yes,” said George, “the grief and consternation into which he was thrown by the sudden death of his wife had undoubtedly a great effect on his mind.”

“He was clean dementit at that time,” cried the Leddy; “he would neither buff nor stye for father nor mother, friend nor foe; a’ the King’s forces would na hae

gart him carry his wife's head in a wise-like manner to the kirk-yard. I'm sure, Mr Keelevin, for ye were at the burial, ye may mind that her father, Kilmarkeckle, had to do't, and lost his Canary snuff by a twirl o' the wind, when he was taking a pinch, as they said, after lowering her head intil the grave; which was thought, at the time, a most unparent-like action for any man to be about at his only dochter's burial."

Mr Keelevin replied, " I will honestly confess to you, that I do think there has of late been signs of a want about Mr Walter. But in his kindness to his poor brother's widow and family, there's great proof and evidence, both of a sound mind, reason, and a right heart. Ye'll just, Mrs Walkinshaw, hae to fight on wi' him as well as ye can, for in the conscience o' me I would, knowing what I know of the family, be wae and sorry to disturb such a consolatory manifestation of brotherly love."

" That's just my opinion," said George,

“and I would fain persuade my mother to put up with the slights and ill usage to which she is so distressingly subjected—at the same time, I cannot say, but I have my fears, that her situation is likely to be made worse rather than better, for Walter appears disposed, not only to treat her in a very mean and unworthy manner, but to give the whole dominion of the house to Mrs Charles.”

“Na,” exclaimed the Leddy, kindling at this dexterous awakening of her wrongs. “He did far waur, he a’maist turnt me out o’ the house by the shouthers.”

“Did he lay hands on you, his mother?” inquired Mr Keelevin with his professional accent and earnestness. But George prevented her from replying, by saying that his mother naturally felt much molested in receiving so harsh a return for the particular partiality with which she had always treated his brother—and was proceeding in his wily and insidious manner to fan the flame he seemed so anxious to smo-

ther. Mr Keelevin, however, of a sudden, appeared to detect his drift, and gave him such a rebuking look, that he became confused and embarrassed, during which the honest lawyer rose and wished them good afternoon—saying to George, who accompanied him to the door,—

“ The deil needs baith a syde cloak and a wary step to hide his cloven-foot—I’ll say nae mair, Mr George ; but dinna mak your poor brother’s bairns waur than they are—and your mother shoud na be egget on in her anger, when she happens, poor body, to tak the dods now and then—for the most sensible of women hae their turns o’ tantrums, and need baith rein and bridle.”

CHAP. XVI.

“ I HOPE and trust,” said Leddy Grippy, as George returned from conducting the lawyer to the door, “ that ye’ll hae mair compassion for your mother than to be sway’t by the crooked counsels o’ yon quirkie bodie. I could see vera weel that he has a because o’ his ain for keeping his thumb on Watty’s unnaturality. But Geordie, he’s no surely the only lawyer in the town? I ~~wat~~ there are scores baith able and willing to tak the business by the hand ; and if there shou’d be nane o’ a sufficient capacity in Glasgow, just tak a step in til Enbro’, where, I hae often heard my honest father say, there are legions o’ a capacity to contest wi’ Belzebub himsel.”

“ I am very anxious, mother, to do every thing to promote your happiness,” was the

reply ; “ but the world will be apt to accuse me of being actuated by some sinister and selfish motive. It would be most disgraceful to me were I to fail.”

“ It will be a black burning shame to alloo a daft man any longer to rule and govern us like a tyrant wi’ a rod o’ iron, pooking and rooking me, his mother, o’ my ain lawful jointure and honest hainings, forbye skailing and scattering his inheritance in a manner, as if ten pound notes were tree-leaves at Hallowe’en.”

“ I am quite sensible of the truth and justice of all you say ; but you know the uncertainty of the law,” said George, “ and the consequences would be fatal to me were we not to succeed.”

“ And what will be the consequences if he were taking it in his head to marry again ? He would mak nae scruple of sending me off frae Grippy at an hour’s warning.”

This touched the keenest nerve of her son’s anxieties ; and he was immediately

alarmed by a long visionary vista of unborn sons, rising between him and the succession to the estate ;—but he only appeared to sympathise with his mother.

“ It’s not possible,” said he, “ even were he to marry again, that he could be so harsh. You have lived ever since your marriage with my father at Grippy. It’s your home, and endeared to you by many pleasing recollections. It would be extreme cruelty now, in your declining years, to force you to live in the close air, and up the dirty turnpike stairs o’ Glasgow.”

“ It would soon be the death o’ me,” exclaimed the Leddy, with a sigh, wiping one of her eyes with the corner of her apron. “ In short, Geordie, if ye dinna step out and get him put past the power o’ marrying, I’ll regard you as little better than art and part in his idiocety. But it’s time I were taking the road, for they’ll a’ be marvelling what keeps me. There’s, however, ae thing I would advise you, and that is, to take gude care and no mint what

we hae been speaking o' to living creature, for nobody can tell what detriment the born idiot might do to us baith, were he to get an inkling before a's ready to put the strait waiscoat o' the law on him ; so I redde you set about it in a wary and wily manner, that he may hae nae cause to jealousy your intent."

There was, however, no great occasion for the latter part of this speech, George being perfectly aware of all the difficulties and delicacies of the case ; but he said,—

" Did he ever attempt actually to strike you ?"

" O, no," replied his mother ; " to do the fool thing justice, it's kindly enough in its manner ; only it will neither be governed nor guided by me as it used to be ; which is a sore trial."

" Because," rejoined George, " had he ever dared to do so, there would then have been less trouble or scruple in instituting proceedings against him."

" Na ; an it's ony way to commode the

business, we might soon provoke him to lift his hand; but it's a powerful creature, and I'm fear't. However, Geordie, ye might lay yoursel out for a bit slaik o' its paw; so just come o'er the morn's morning and try; for it'll no do to stand shilly-shallying, if we hope to mak a right legality o't."

Cowardice is the best auxiliary to the police, and George had discretion enough not to risk the danger of rousing the sleeping lion of his brother's Herculean sinews. But, in other respects, he took his mother's advice; and, avoiding the guilt of causing an offence, in order that he might be able to prosecute the offender, he applied to Gabriel Pitwinnoch, the writer, from whose character he expected to encounter fewer scruples and less scrutiny than with Mr Keelevin.

In the meantime, the Leddy, who had returned home to Grippy, preserved the most entire reserve upon the subject to all the inmates of the family, and acted her

part so well, that even a much more suspicious observer than her daughter-in-law would never have suspected her of double dealing. Indeed, any change that could be perceived in her manner was calculated to lull every suspicion,—for she appeared more than usually considerate and attentive towards Walter, and even condescended to wheedle and coax him on different occasions, when it would have been more consonant to her wonted behaviour had she employed commands and reproaches.

In the course of a week after the interview with Mr Keelevin, George went to Edinburgh, and he was accompanied in his journey by the wary Gabriel Pitwinnoch. What passed between them on the road, and who they saw, and what advice they received in the intellectual city, we need not be particular in relating; but the result was, that, about a week after their return, Gabriel came to Grippy, accompanied by a stranger, of whose consequence and rank it would appear the

Leddy had some previous knowledge, as she deported herself towards him with a degree of ceremonious deference very unusual to her habits. The stranger, indeed, was no less a personage than Mr Threeper the advocate, a gentleman of long standing and great practice in the Parliament House, and much celebrated for his shrewd perception of technical flaws, and clever discrimination of those nicer points of the law that are so often at variance with justice.

It happened, that, when this learned doctor of the Caledonian Padua arrived with his worthy associate, Mrs Charles Walkinshaw was in the fields; but, the moment her son James saw him, he was so struck with his appearance, that he ran to tell her. Walter also followed him, under the influence of the same feeling, and said,—

“Come in, Bell Fatherlans, and see what a warld’s won’er Pitwinnoch the writer has brought to our house. My

mother says it's a haudthecat, and that it gangs about the town o' Embro, walking afore the Lords, in a black gown, wi' a wig on'ts head. I marvel what the creature's come here for. It has a silver snuff-box, that it's ay pat patting; and ye would think, to hear it speak, that King Solomon, wi' a' his hundreds o' wives and concubines, was but a fool to him."

Mrs Charles was alarmed at hearing of such a visitor; for the journey of George and Pitwinnoch to Edinburgh immediately occurred to her, and a feeling of compassion, mingled with gratitude for the kindness which Walter had lately shown to herself and her children, suggested that she ought to put him on his guard.

"Walter," said she, "I would not advise you to go near the house while the two lawyers are there,—for who knows what they may do to you? But go as fast as ye can to Glasgow, and tell Mr Keelevin what has happened; and say that I have some reason to fear it's a visit that

bodes you no good, and therefore ye'll stand in need of his advice and assistance."

The natural, who had an instinctive horror of the law, made no reply, but, with a strong expression of terror in his countenance, immediately left her, and went straight to Glasgow.

CHAP. XVII.

DURING the journey of George and Pitwinnoch to Edinburgh, a Brief of Chancery had been quietly obtained, directing the Sheriff of the county to summon a jury, to examine into the alleged fatuity of Walter; and the visit of the latter with Mr Threeper, the advocate, to Grippy, was to meet George, for the purpose of determining with respect to the evidence that it might be requisite to adduce before the inquest. All this was conducted, as it was intended to appear, in a spirit of the greatest delicacy towards the unfortunate *fatuus*, consistent with the administration of public justice.

“ I can assure you,” said our friend Gabriel to Mr Threeper, as they walked towards the house—the advocate perusing

the ground as he poked his way along with his cane, and occasionally taking snuff; "I can assure you, that nothing but the most imperious necessity could have induced Mr George Walkinshaw to institute these proceedings; for he is a gentleman of the utmost respectability; and to my knowledge has been long and often urged in vain to get his brother cognost; but, until the idiot's conduct became so intolerable, that his mother could no longer endure it, he was quite inexorable."

"Is Mr George in affluent circumstances?" said the advocate, dryly.

"He is but a young man; the house, however, in which he is a partner is one of the most flourishing in Glasgow," was the answer.

"He has, perhaps, a large family?"

"O dear no; only one daughter; and his wife," said Gabriel, "is, I understand, not likely to have any more."

"She may, however, have sons, Pitwinnoch," rejoined the advocate, wittily—at

the same time taking snuff. "But you say it is the mother that has chiefly incited Mr Walkinshaw to this action."

"So he told me," replied the writer.

"Her evidence will be most important ; for it is not natural that a mother would urge a process of such a nature, without very strong grounds indeed, unless she has some immediate or distinct prospective interest in the result. Have you any idea that such is the case?"

"I should think not," said Gabriel.

"Do you imagine that such allowance as the Court might grant for the custody of the *fatuus* would have any influence with her?" inquired Mr Threeper, without raising his eyes from the road.

"I have always understood," was the reply, "that she is in the possession, not only of a handsome jointure, but of a considerable provision, specially disposed to her by the will of old Plealands, her father."

"Ah ! was she the daughter of old Plealands?" said the advocate. "It was in a

cause of his that I was first retained. He had the spirit of litigation in a very zealous degree."

In this manner the two redressers of wrongs chattingly proceeded towards Grippy, by appointment, to meet George; and they arrived, as we have related in the foregoing chapter, a few minutes before he made his appearance.

In the meantime, Watty hastened with rapid steps, goaded by a mysterious apprehension of some impending danger, to the counting-house of Mr Keelevin, whom he found at his desk.

"Weel, Mr Walter," said the honest writer, looking up from a deed he was perusing, somewhat surprised at seeing him—"What's the best o' your news the day, and what's brought you frae Grippy?"

"Mr Keelevin," replied Walter, going towards him on tiptoe, and whispering audibly in his ear, "I'll tell you something, Mr Keelevin:—twa gleds o' the law hae

lighted yonder ; and ye ken, by your ain ways, that the likes o' them dinna flee afield for naething."

" No possible !" exclaimed Mr Keelevin ; and the recollection of his interview with George and the Leddy flashing upon him at the moment, he at once divined the object of their visit ; and added, " It's most abominable ;—but ken ye what they're seeking, Mr Walter ?"

" No," said he. " But Bell Fatherlans bade me come and tell you ; for she thought I might need your counsel."

" She has acted a true friend's part ; and I'm glad ye're come," replied the lawyer ; " and for her and her bairns' sake, I hope we'll be able to defeat their plots and devices. But I would advise you, Mr Walter, to keep out o' harm's way, and no gang in the gate o' the gleds, as ye ca' them."

" Hae ye ony ark or amrie, Mr Keelevin, where a body might den himsel till they're out o' the gate and away ?" cried

Walter timidly, and looking anxiously round the room.

“Ye should na speak sic havers, Mr Walter, but conduct yourself mair like a man,” said his legal friend grievedly. “Indeed, Mr Walter, as I hae some notion that they’re come to tak down your words—may be to spy your conduct, and mak nae gude report thereon to their superiors—tak my advice, and speak as little as possible.”

“I’ll no say ae word—I’ll be a dumbie—I’ll sit as quiet as ony ane o’ the images afore Bailie Glasford’s house at the head o’ the Stockwell. King William himsel, on his bell-metal horse at the Cross, is a popular preacher, Mr Keelevin, compared to what I’ll be.”

The simplicity and sincerity with which this was said moved the kind-hearted lawyer at once to smile and sigh.

“There will, I hope, Mr Walter,” said he, “be no occasion to put any restraint like that upon yoursel; only it’s my ad-

vice to you as a friend, to enter into no conversation with any one you do not well know, and to dress in your best clothes, and shave yoursel,—and in a' things demean and deport yoursel, like the laird o' Kittlestonheugh, and the representative of an ancient and respected family."

"O, I can easily do that," replied the natural; "and I'll tak my father's ivory-headed cane, with the golden viri, and the silver e'e for a tassel, frae ahint the scrutoire, where it has ay stood since his death, and walk up and down the front of the house like a Glasgow magistrate."

"For the love o' Heaven, Mr Walter," exclaimed the lawyer, "do nae sic mad like action! The like o' that is a' they want."

"In whatna other way, then," said Walter helplessly, "can I behave like a gentleman, or a laird o' yird and stane, wi' the retinue o' an ancient pedigree like my father's Walkinshaws o' Kittlestonheugh?"

“ ‘Deed,” said Mr Keelevin compassionately, “ I’m wae to say’t—but I doot, I doot, it’s past the compass o’ my power to advise you.”

“ I’m sure,” exclaimed Walter despairingly, “ that THE MAKER was ill aff for a turn when he took to the creating o’ lawyers. The deils are but prentice work compared to them. I dinna ken what to do, Mr Keelevin—I wish that I was dead, but I’m no like to dee, as Jenny says in her wally-wae about her father’s cow and auld Robin Gray.”

“ Mr Walter,” said his friend, after a pause of several minutes, “ go you to Mrs Hypel, your grandmother, for the present, and I’ll out to Grippy, and sift the meaning o’ this visitation. When I have gathered what it means, we’ll hae the better notion in what way we ought to fight with the foe.”

“ I’ll smash them like a fore hammer,” exclaimed Walter proudly. “ I’ll stand ahint a dike, and gie them a-belter wi’

stances, till I hae na left the souls in their bodies—that's what I will,—if ye approve o't, Mr Keelevin."

"Weel, weel, Mr Walter," was the chagrined and grieved reply, "we'll see to that when I return; but it's a terrible thing to think o' proving a man non compos mentis for the only sensible action he ever did in all his life. Nevertheless, I will not let myself despond; and I have only for the present to exhort you to get yoursel in an order and fitness to appear as ye ought to be;—for really, Mr Walter, ye alloo yoursel to gang sae like a divor, that I dinna wonder ye hae been ta'en notice o'. So I counsel you to mak yoursel trig, and no to play ony antics."

Walter assured him, that his advice would in every respect be followed; and, leaving the office, he went straight to the residence of his grandmother, while Mr Keelevin, actuated at once by his humanity and professional duty, ordered his horse, and reached Grippy just as the ad-

vocate, Mr Pitwinnoch, and George, were on the point of coming away, after waiting in vain for the return of Walter, whom Mr Threeper was desirous of conversing with personally.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE triumvirate and Leddy Grippy were disconcerted at the appearance of Mr Keelevin—for, at that moment, the result of Mr Threeper's inquiries among the servants had put them all in the most agreeable and unanimous opinion with respect to the undoubted certainty of poor Waty's fatuity.—“ We have just to walk over the course,” the advocate was saying; when George, happening to glance his eye towards the window, beheld the benevolent lawyer coming up the avenue.

“ Good Heavens !” said he, “ what can that old pest, Keelevin, want here ?”

“ Keelevin !” exclaimed the Leddy,—“ that's a miracle to me. I think, gentlemen,” she added, “ ye had as weel gang away by the back door—for ye would na

like, may be, to be fashed wi' his confabbles. He's no a man, or I'm far mista'en, that kens muckle about the pre-jinketties o' the law, though he got the poor daft creature harl't through the difficulties o' the plea wi' my cousin Gilhaise, the Mauchlin maltster. I'm very sure, Mr Threeper, he's no an acquaintance ye would like to cultivate, for he has na the talons o' an advocate versed in the devices o' the courts, but is a quirkie bodie, capable o' making law no law at a', according to the best o' my discernment, which, to be sure, in matters o' locutories and decreets, is but that o' a hamely household woman, so I would advise you to eschew his company at this present time."

Mr Threeper, however, saw farther into the lady's bosom than she suspected; and as it is never contrary, either to the interest of advocate or agent, to avoid having causes contested, especially when there is, as was in this case, substance enough

to support a long and zealous litigation, that gentleman said,—

“ Then Mr Keelevin is the agent who was employed in the former action ? ”

“ Just sae,” resumed the Leddy, “ and ye ken he could na, wi’ ony regard to himsel, be art and part on this occasion.”

“ Ah, but, madam,” replied the advocate, earnestly, “ he may be agent for the *fatuus*. It is, therefore, highly proper we should set out with a right understanding respecting that point ; for, if the allegations are to be controverted, it is impossible to foresee what obstacles may be raised, although, in my opinion, from the evidence I have heard, there is no doubt that the fatuity of your son is a fact which cannot fail to be in the end substantiated. Don’t you think, Mr Pitwinnoch, that we had as well see Mr Keelevin ? ”

“ Certainly,” said Gabriel. “ And, indeed, considering that, by the brief to the Sheriff, the Laird is a party, perhaps, even though Mr Keelevin should not have

been employed, it would be but fair, and look well towards the world, were he instructed to take up this case on behalf of the *fatuus*. What say you, Mr Walkinshaw ?”

George did not well know what to say, but he replied, that, for many reasons, he was desirous the whole affair should be managed as privately as possible. “ If, however, the forms of the procedure required that an agent should act for Walter, I have no objection ; at the same time, I do not think Mr Keelevin the fittest person.”

“ Heavens and earth !” exclaimed the Leddy, “ here’s a respondenting and a hearing, and the Lord Ordinary and a’ the fifteen Lords frae Embro’ come to herry us out o’ house and hall. Gentlemen, an ye’ll tak my advice, who, in my worthy father’s time, had some inkling o’ what the cost o’ law pleas are, ye’ll hae naething to do wi’ either Keelevin, Gardevine, or ony other Vines in the shape o’ pro forma agents :

but settle the business wi' the Sheriff in a douce and discreet manner."

Mr Threeper, looking towards Mr Pitwinnoch and George, rapped his ivory snuff-box, rimmed and garnished with gold, and smiling, took a pinch as Mr Keelevin was shown into the room.

"Mr George," said Mr Keelevin sedately, after being seated; "I am not come here to ask needless questions, but as Man of Business for your brother, it will be necessary to serve me with the proper notices as to what you intend."

Mr Threeper again had recourse to his box, and Gabriel looked inquiringly at his client—who could with difficulty conceal his confusion, while the old lady, who had much more presence of mind, said,—

"May I be sae bold, Mr Keelevin, as to speer wha sent you here, at this time?"

"I came at Mr Walter's own particular and personal request," was the reply; and he turned at the same time towards the ad-

vocate, and added, "That does not look very like fatuity."

"He never could hae done that o' his own free will. I should na wonder if the interloper, Bell Fatherlans, sent him—but I'll soon get to the bottom o't," exclaimed the Liddy, and she immediately left the room in quest of Mrs Charles, to inquire. During her absence, Mr Keelevin resumed,—

"It is not to be contested, Mr Threeper," for he knew the person of the advocate, "that the Laird is a man o' singularities and oddities—we a' hae our foibles ; but he got a gude education, and his schoolmaster bore testimony on a former occasion to his capacity ; and if it can be shown that he does not manage his estate so advantageously as he might do, surely that can never be objected against him, when we every day see so many o' the wisest o' our lairds, and lords, and country gentry, falling to pigs and whistles, frae even down inattention or prodigality. I think it will

be no easy thing to prove Mr Walter incapable o' managing his own affairs, with his mother's assistance."

"Ah! Mr Keelevin, with his mother's assistance!" exclaimed the acute Mr Threeper. "It's time that he were out of leading-strings, and able to take care of himself, without his mother's assistance—if he's ever likely to do so."

At this crisis, the Leddy returned into the room flushed with anger. "It's just as I jealoused," cried she; "it's a' the wark o' my gude-dochter—it was her that sent him; black was the day she e'er came to stay here; many a sore heart in the watches o' the night hae I had sin syne, for my poor weak misled laa; for if he were left to the freedom o' his own will, he would na stand on stepping stanes, but, without scrupulosity, would send me, his mother, to crack sand, or mak my leaving where I could, after wastering a' my jointure."

This speech made a strong impression

on the minds of all the lawyers present. Mr Keelevin treasured it up, and said nothing. Our friend Gabriel glanced the tail of his eye at the advocate, who, without affecting to have noticed the interested motive which the Leddy had betrayed, said to Mr Keelevin,—

“ The case, Sir, cannot but go before a jury ; for, although the *fatuus* be of a capacity to repeat any injunction which he may have received, and which is not inconsistent with a high degree of fatuity—it does not therefore follow that he is able to originate such motions or volitions of the mind as are requisite to constitute what may be denominated a legal modicum of understanding, the possession of which in Mr Walter Walkinshaw is the object of the proposed inquiry to determine.”

“ Very well, gentlemen, since such is the case,” replied Mr Keelevin, rising, “ as I have undertaken the cause, it is unnecessary for us to hold any further conversa-

tion on the subject. I shall be prepared to protect my client."

With these words he left the room, in some hope that possibly they might induce George still to stay proceedings. But the cupidity of George's own breast, the views and arguments of his counsel, and the animosity of his mother, all co-operated to weaken their effect; so that, in the course of as short a time as the forms of the judicature permitted, a jury was impannelled before the Sheriff, according to the tenor of the special brief of Chancery which had been procured for the purpose, and evidence as to the state of poor Wat-ty's understanding and capacity regularly examined;—some account of which we shall proceed to lay before our readers, premising, that Mr Threeper opened the business in a speech replete with eloquence and ingenuity, and all that metaphysical refinement for which the Scottish bar was then, as at present, so justly celebrated. Nothing, indeed, could be more subtile,

nor less applicable to the coarse and daily tear and wear of human concerns, than his definition of what constituted “ the minimum of understanding, or of reason, or of mental faculty in general, which the law, in its wisdom, required to be enjoyed by every individual claiming to exercise the functions that belong to man, as a subject, a citizen, a husband, a father, a master, a servant,—in one word, to enable him to execute those different essential duties, which every gentleman of the jury so well knew, and so laudably, so respectably, and so meritoriously performed.”—But we regret that our limits do not allow us to enter upon the subject; and the more so, as it could not fail to prove highly interesting to our fair readers, in whose opinion the eloquence of the Parliament House of Edinburgh, no doubt, possesses many charming touches of sentiment, and amiable pathetic graces.

CHAP. XIX.

THE first witness examined was Jenny Purdie, servant to Mr George Walkinshaw. She had previously been several years in the service of his father, and is the same who, as our readers will perhaps recollect, contrived so femininely to seduce half-a-crown from the pocket of the old man, when she brought him the news of the birth of his son's twin daughters.

“What is your opinion of Mr Walter Walkinshaw?” inquired Mr Threeper.

“’Deed, Sir,” said Jenny, “I hae but a sma’ opinion o’ him—he’s a daft man, and has been sae a’ his days.”

“But what do you mean by a daft man?”

“I thought every body kent what a daft man is,” replied Jenny; “he’s just

silly, and taver, and heedless, and o' an inclination to swattle in the dirt like a grumphy."

"Well, but do you mean to say," interrupted the advocate, "that, to your knowledge, he has been daft all his days?"

"I never kent him ony better."

"But you have not known him all his days—therefore, how can you say he has been daft all his days?—He might have been wise enough when you did not know him."

"I dinna think it," said Jenny;—"I dinna think it was ever in him to be wise—he's no o' a nature to be wise."

"What do you mean by a nature?—Explain yourself."

"I canna explain mysel ony better," was the answer; "only I ken that a cat's no a dog, nor o' a nature to be,—and so the Laird could ne'er be a man o' sense."

"Very ingenious, indeed," said Mr Threpper; "and I am sure the gentlemen of the jury must be satisfied that it is not

possible to give a clearer—a more distinctive impression of the deficiency of Mr Walkinshaw's capacity, than has been given by this simple and innocent country girl.—But, Jenny, can you tell us of any instance of his daftness?"

"I can tell you o' naething but the sic like about him."

"Cannot you remember any thing he said or did on any particular day?"

"O aye, atweel I wat I can do that,—on the vera day when I gaed hame, frae my service at the Grippy to Mr George's, the sheep were sheared, and Mr Watty said they were made sae naked, it was a shame to see them, and took one o' his mother's flannen polonies, to mak a hap to Mall Loup-the-Dike, the auld ewe, for decency."

Jenny was then cross-questioned by Mr Queerie, the able and intelligent advocate employed for the defence by Mr Keelevin; but her evidence was none shaken, nor did it appear that her master had in any way

influenced her. Before she left the box, the Sheriff said jocularly,—

“ I’m sure, from your account, Jenny, that Mr Walkinshaw’s no a man ye would like to marry ?”

“ There’s no saying,” replied Jenny,—
“ the Kittlestonheugh’s a braw estate ; and mony a better born than me has been blithe to put up wi’ houses and lan’s, though wit and worth were baith wanting.”

The first witness thus came off with considerable eclat, and indeed gained the love and affections, it is said, of one of the jurors, an old bien carle, a bonnet-laird, to whom she was, in the course of a short time after, married.

The next witness was Mr Mordecai Saxheere, preses and founder of that renowned focus of sosherie the Yarn Club, which held its periodical libations of the vintage of the colonies in the buxom Widow Sheid’s tavern, ~~in~~ Sour-milk John’s Land, a stately pile that still lifts its lofty

head in the Trongate. He was an elderly, trim, smooth, Quaker-faced gentleman, dressed in drab, with spacious buckram-lined skirts, that came round on his knees, giving to the general outline of his figure the appearance of a cone supported on legs in white worsted hose. He wore a highly powdered horse-hair wig, with a long queue ; buckles at the knees and in his shoes, presenting, in the collective attributes of his dress and appearance, a respect-bespeaking epitome of competency, good-eating, honesty, and self-conceit. He was one of several gentlemen whom the long-forecasting George had carried with him to Grippy on those occasions when he was desirous to provide witnesses, to be available when the era should arrive that had now come to pass.

“ Well, Mr Saxheere,” said the Edinburgh advocate, “ what have you to say with respect to the state of Mr Walter Walkinshaw ?”

“ Sir,” replied the preses of the Yarn

Club, giving that sort of congratulatory smack with which he was in the practice of swallowing and sending round the dram that crowned the substantials, and was herald to what were called the liquidities of the club,—“ Sir,” said Mordecai Saxheere, “ I have been in no terms of intromission with Mr Walkinshaw of Grippy, cept and except in the way of visitation ; and on those occasions I always found him of a demeanour more sportive to others than congenial.”

“ You are a merchant, I believe, Mr Saxheere,” said Mr Threeper ; “ you have your shop in the High Street, near the Cross. On the market day you keep a bottle of whisky and a glass on the counter, from which, as I understand, you are in the practice of giving your customers a dram—first preeing or smelling the liquor yourself, and then handing it to them.—Now, I would ask you, if Mr Walkinshaw were to come to your shop on the market day, would you deal with him ?—would

you, on your oath, smell the glass, and then hand it across the counter, to be by him drunk off?"

The advocate intended this as a display of his intimate knowledge of the local habits and usages of Glasgow, though himself but an Edinburgh man,—in order to amaze the natives by his cleverness.

"Sir," replied Mr Saxheere, again repeating his habitual congratulatory smack, "much would rely on the purpose for which he came to custom. If he offered me yarn for sale, there could be no opponency on my side to give him the fair price of the day; but, if he wanted to buy, I might undergo some constipation of thought before compliance."

"The doubtful credit of any wiser person might produce the same astringency," said the advocate, slyly.

"No doubt it would," replied the preses of the Yarn Club; "but the predicament of the Laird of Grippy would na be under that denominator, but because I would

have a suspicion of him in the way of judgment and sensibility."

"Then he is not a man that you would think it safe to trade with as a customer?" said the Sheriff, desirous of putting an end to his prosing.

"Just so, Sir," replied Mordecai; "for, though it might be safe in the way of advantage, I could not think myself, in the way of character, free from an imputation, were I to intromit with him."

It was not deemed expedient to cross question this witness; and another was called, a celebrated Professor of Mathematics in the University, the founder and preses of a club, called the "Anderson Summer Saturday's." The scientific attainments and abstract genius of this distinguished person were undisputed; but his simplicity of character and absence of mind were no less remarkable. The object that George probably had in view in taking him, as an occasional visitor, to see his brother, was, perhaps, to qualify the

Professor to bear testimony to the arithmetical incapacity of Walter; and certainly the Professor had always found him sufficiently incapable to have warranted him to give the most decisive evidence on that head; but a circumstance had occurred at the last visit, which came out in the course of the investigation, by which it would appear the opinion of the learned mathematician was greatly shaken.

“ I am informed, Professor, that you are acquainted with Mr Walter Walkinshaw. Will you have the goodness to tell the Court what is your opinion of that gentleman?” said the advocate.

“ My opinion is, that he is a very extraordinary man; for he put a question to me when I last saw him, which I have not yet been able to answer.”

The advocate thought the Professor said this in irony,—and inquired, with a simper,—

“ And, pray, what might that question be?”

“ I was trying if he could calculate the aliquot parts of a pound ; and he said to me, could I tell him the reason that there were but four and twenty bawbees in a shilling ?”

“ You may retire,” said the advocate, disconcerted ; and the Professor immediately withdrew ; for still the counsel in behalf of Walter declined to cross question.

“ The next witness that I shall produce,” resumed Mr Threeper, is one whom I call with extreme reluctance. Every man must sympathise with the feelings of a mother on such an occasion as this,—and will easily comprehend, that, in the questions which my duty obliges me to put to Mrs Walkinshaw, I am, as it were, obliged, out of that sacred respect which is due to her maternal sensibility, to address myself in more general terms than I should otherwise do.”

The Leddy was then called,—and the advocate, with a solemn voice and pauses

of lengthened sadness and commiseration, said,—

“ Madam, the Court and the jury do not expect you to enter into any particular description of the state of your unfortunate son. They only desire to know if you think he is capable of conducting his affairs like other men.”

“ Him capable !” exclaimed the Leddy. “ He’s no o’ a capacity to be advised.”

She would have proceeded farther,—but Mr Threeper interposed, saying, “ Madam, we shall not distress you farther; the Court and the jury must be satisfied.”

Not so was Mr Keelevin, who nodded to Mr Queerie, the counsel for Walter; and he immediately rose.

“ I wish,” said he, “ just to put one question to the witness. How long is it since your son has been so incapable of acting for himself?”

“ I canna gie you day nor date,” replied the Leddy; “ but he has been in a state

of condumacity ever since his dochter diet."

"Indeed!" said Mr Queerie; "then he was not always incapable?"

"O no," cried the Leddy; "he was a most tractable creature, and the kindest son," she added, with a sigh; "but since that time he's been neither to bind nor to haud, threatning to send me, his mother, a garsing—garing me lay out my own lawful jointure on the house, and using me in the most horridable manner—wastring his income in the most thoughtless way."

Mr Threeper began to whisper to our friend Gabriel, and occasionally to look, with an afflicted glance, towards the Leddy.

Mr Queerie resumed,—

"Your situation, I perceive, has been for some time very unhappy—but, I suppose, were Mr Walkinshaw to make you a reasonable compensation for the trouble you take in managing his house, you

would have no objections still to continue with him."

"O! to be surely," said the Leddy ;—
"only it would need to be something worth while ; and my gude-dochter and her family would require to be obligated to gang hame."

"Certainly, what you say, Madam, is very reasonsble," rejoined Mr Queerie ;—
"and I have no doubt that the Court perceives that a great part of your distress, from the idiotry of your son, arises from his having brought in the lady alluded to and her family."

"It has come a' frae that," replied the witness, unconscious of the force of what she was saying ;—"for, 'cepting his unnaturality to me about them, his idiocety is very harmless."

"Perhaps not worse than formerly ?

A look from George at this crisis put her on her guard ; and she instantly replied, as if eager to redeem the effects of what she had just said,—

“ ‘Deed, Sir, it’s no right to let him continue in the rule and power o’ the property; for nobody can tell what he may commit.”

At this juncture, Mr Queerie, perceiving her wariness, sat down; and the Reverend Dr Denholm being called by Mr Threeper, stated, in answer to the usual question,—

“ I acknowledge, that I do not think Mr Walkinshaw entirely of a sound mind; but he has glaiks and gleams o’ sense about him, that mak me very dootful if I could judicially swear, that he canna deport himself wi’ sufficient sagacity.”

“ But,” said the advocate, “ did not you yourself advise Mr George Walkinshaw to institute these proceedings.”

“ I’ll no disown that,” replied the Doctor; “ but Mr Walter has since then done such a humane and a Christian duty to his brother’s widow, and her two defenceless and portionless bairns, that I canna, in my conscience, think now so lightly of him as I once did.”

Here the jury consulted together ; and, after a short conference, the foreman inquired if Mr Walkinshaw was in Court. On being answered in the negative, the Sheriff suggested an adjournment till next day, that he might be brought forward.

CHAP. XX.

WHEN the Leddy returned from the Court to Grippy, Walter, who had in the meantime been somehow informed of the nature of the proceedings instituted against him, said to his mother,—

“ Weel, mother, so ye hae been trying to mak me daft ? but I’m just as wise as ever.”

“ Thou’s ordaint to bring disgrace on us a’,” was her answer, dictated under a feeling of vague apprehension, arising from the uncertainty which seemed to lower upon the issue of the process by the evidence of Dr Denholm.

“ I’m sure I hae nae hand in’t,” said Walter ; “ an ye had na meddlet wi’ me, I would ne’er hae spoken to Keelevin, to vex you. But I suppose, mother, that you

and that wily headcadab Geordie hae made naething o' your fause witnessing."

"Haud thy fool tongue, and insult na me," exclaimed the Leddy in a rage at the simpleton's insinuation, which was uttered without the slightest sentiment of reproach. "But," she added, "ye'll see what it is to stand wi' a het face afore the Court the morn."

"I'll no gang," replied Walter; "I hae nae broo o' Courts and law-pleas."

"But ye shall gang, if the life be in your body."

"I'll do nothing but what Mr Keelevin bids me."

"Mr Keelevin," exclaimed the Leddy, "ought to be drum't out o' the town for bringing sic trebalation intil my family.—What business had he, wi' his controversies, to gumle law and justice in the manner he has done the day?" And while she was thus speaking, George and Mr Pitwinnoch made their appearance.

"Hegh man, Geordie!" said Watty,—

“ I’m thinking, instead o’ making me daft, ye hae demented my mother, poor bodie ; for she’s come hame wi’ a flyte proceeding out of her mouth like a two-edged sword.”

“ If you were not worse than ye are,” said his brother, “ you would have compassion on your mother’s feelings.”

“ I’m sure,” said Watty, “ I hae every compassion for her ; but there was nae need o’ her to wis to mak me daft. It’s a foul bird that files its ain nest ; and really, to speak my mind, I think, Geordie, that you and her were na wise, but far left to yoursels, to put your heads intil the hangman’s halter o’ a law-plea anent my intellectuals.”

Gabriel Pitwinnoch, who began to distrust the effect of the evidence, was troubled not a little at this observation ; for he thought, if Walter spoke as well to the point before the Court, the cause must be abandoned. As for George, he was scarcely in a state to think of any thing, so much was he confounded and vexed by the im-

pression of Dr Denholm's evidence, the tenor of which was so decidedly at variance with all he had flattered himself it would be. He, however, said,—

“Ye're to be examined to-morrow, and what will you say for yourself?”

“I hae mair modesty,” replied Walter, “than to be my ain trumpeter—I'll say naething but what Mr Keelevin bids me.”

Gabriel smiled encouragingly to George at this, who continued,—

“You had better tak care what ye say.”

“Na,” cried Watty, “an that's the gait o't, I'll keep a calm sough—least said's soonest mendit—I'll haud my tongue.”

“But you must answer every question.”

“Is't in the Shorter or the Larger Catechism?” said Walter. “I can say till the third petition o' the t'ane, and frae end to end o' the t'ither.”

“That's quite enough,” replied Gabriel, “and more than will be required of you.”

But the satisfaction which such an

agreeable exposure of the innocence of the simpleton was calculated to afford to all present, was disturbed at this juncture by the entrance of Mr Keelevin.

“ I’m glad, gentlemen,” said he, the moment he came in, “ that I have found you here. I think you must all be convinced that the investigation should na gang farther. I’m sure Mr Walter will be willing to grant a reasonable consideration to his mother for her care and trouble in the house, and even to assign a moitie o’ his income to you, Mr George. Be counselled by me :—let us settle the matter in that manner quietly.”

Pitwinnoch winked to his client,—and Wattie said,—

“ What for should I gie my mother ony more ? Has na she bed, board, and washing, house-room and chattels, a’ clear aboon her jointure ? and I’m sure Geordie has nae lawful claim on me for ony aliment.—Od, Mr Keelevin, it would be a terrible wastrie

o' me to do the like o' that. They might weel mak me daft if I did sae."

"But it will be far decenter and better for a' parties to enter into some agreement of that sort. Don't you think so, Mrs Walkinshaw, rather than to go on with this liarsh business of proving your son an idiot?"

"I'm no an idiot, Mr Keelevin," exclaimed Walter—"though it seems to me that there's a thraw in the judgment o' the family, or my mother and brother would ne'er hae raised this straemash about my capacity to take care o' the property. Did na I keep the cows frae the corn a' the last Ruglen fair-day, when Jock, the herd, got leave to gang in to try his luck and fortune at the roley-poleys?"

Honest Mr Keelevin wrung his hands at this.

"I'm sure, Sir," said George, in his sleekest manner, "that you must yourself, Mr Keelevin, be quite sensible that the inquiry ought to proceed to a verdict."

“ I’m sensible o’ nae sic things, Mr George,” was the indignant answer. “ Your brother is in as full possession of all his faculties as when your father executed the cursed entail, or when he was married to Kilmarkeckle’s dochter.”

“ ’Deed, Mr Keelevin,” replied Walter, “ ye’re mista’en there ; for I hae had twa teeth tuggit out for the toothache since syne ; and I hae grown deaf in the left lug.”

“ Did na I tell you,” said the worthy man, angrily, “ that ye were na to open your mouth?”

“ Really, Mr Keelevin, I won’er to hear you,” replied the natural, with great sincerity ; “ the mouth’s the only trance-door that I ken to the belly.”

“ Weel, weel,” again exclaimed his friend ; “ mak a kirk and a mill o’t ; but be ruled by me, and let us draw up a reasonable agreement.”

“ I’m thinking, Mr Keelevin, that ye dinna ken that I hae made a paction wit[

mysel to sign nae law-papers, for fear it be to the injury of Betty Bodle."

" Betty Bodle !" said Gabriel Pitwinnoch, eagerly ; " she has been long dead."

" Ah !" said Walter, " that's a' ye ken about it. She's baith living and life like."

Mr Keelevin was startled and alarmed at this ; but abstained from saying any thing. Gabriel also said nothing ; but looked significantly to his client, who interposed, and put an end to the conversation.

" Having gone so far," said he, " I could, with no respect for my own character, allow the proceedings to be now arrested. It is, therefore, unnecessary either to consider your suggestion, or to hold any further debate here on the subject."

Mr Keelevin made no reply to this ; but said, as he had something to communicate in private to his client, he would carry him to Glasgow for that night. To so reasonable and so professional a pro-

posal no objection was made. Walter himself also at once acquiesced, on the express condition, that he was not to be obliged to sign any law-papers.

CHAP. XXI.

NEXT day, when the Court again assembled, Walter was there, seated beside his agent, and dressed in his best. Every eye was directed towards him ; and the simple expression of wonder, mingled with anxiety, which the scene around him occasioned, gave an air of so much intelligence to his features, which were regular, and, indeed, handsome, that he excited almost universal sympathy ; even Mr Threeper was perplexed, when he saw him, at the proper time, rise from beside his friend, and, approaching the bottom of the table, make a slow and profound bow, first to the Sheriff and then to the jury.

“ You are Mr Walkinshaw, I believe ?” said Mr Threeper.

“ I believe I am,” replied Walter, timidly.

“ What are you, Mr Walkinshaw ?”

“ A man, Sir.—My mother and brother want to mak me a daft ane.”

“ How do you suspect them of any such intention ?”

“ Because ye see I’m here—I would na hae been here but for that.”

The countenance of honest Keelevin began to brighten, while that of George was clouded and overcast.

“ Then you do not think you are a daft man ?” said the advocate.

“ Nobody thinks himsel daft. I dare say ye think ye’re just as wise as me.”

A roar of laughter shook the Court, and Threeper blushed and was disconcerted ; but he soon resumed, tartly,—

“ Upon my word, Mr Walkinshaw, you have a good opinion of yourself. I should like to know for what reason ?”

“ That’s a droll question to speer at a man,” replied Walter. “ A poll parrot

thinks weel o' itsel, which is but a feathered creature, and short o' the capacity of a man by twa hands."

Mr Keelevin trembled and grew pale ; and the advocate, recovering full possession of his assurance, proceeded,—

" And so ye think, Mr Walkinshaw, that the two hands make all the difference between a man and a parrot ?"

" No, no, Sir," replied Walter, " I dinna think that,—for ye ken the beast has feathers."

" And why have not men feathers ?"

" That's no a right question, Sir, to put to the like o' me, a weak human creature ;—ye should ask their Maker," said Walter gravely.

The advocate was again repulsed ; Pitwinnoch sat doubting the intelligence of his ears, and George shivering from head to foot : a buzz of satisfaction pervaded the whole Court.

" Well, but not to meddle with such mysteries," said Mr Threeper, assuming a

jocular tone, "I suppose you think yourself a very clever fellow?"

"At some things," replied Walter modestly; "but I dinna like to make a roos o' mysel."

"And pray now, Mr Walkinshaw, may I ask what do you think you do best?"

"Man! and ye could see how I can sup curds and ream—there's no ane in a' the house can ding me."

The sincerity and exultation with which this was expressed convulsed the Court, and threw the advocate completely on his beam-ends. However, he soon righted, and proceeded,—

"I don't doubt your ability in that way, Mr Walkinshaw; and I dare say you can play a capital knife and fork."

"I'm better at the spoon," replied Walter laughing.

"Well, I must confess you are a devilish clever fellow."

"Mair sae, I'm thinking, than ye thought, Sir.—But noo, since," continued Walter,

“ ye hae speer’t so many questions at me, will ye answer one yoursel ?”

“ O, I can have no possible objection to do that, Mr Walkinshaw.”

“ Then,” said Walter, “ how muckle are ye to get frae my brother for this job ?”

Again the Court was convulsed, and the questioner again disconcerted.

“ I suspect, brother Threeper,” said the Sheriff, “ that you are in the wrong box.”

“ I suspect so too,” replied the advocate laughing ; but, addressing himself again to Walter, he said,—

“ You have been married, Mr Walkinshaw ?”

“ Aye, auld Doctor Denholm married me to Betty Bodle.”

“ And pray where is she ?”

“ Her mortal remains, as the headstone says, lie in the kirkyard.”

The countenance of Mr Keelevin became pale and anxious—George and Pitwinnoch exchanged smiles of gratulation.

“ You had a daughter ?” said the advo-

cate, looking knowingly to the jury, who sat listening with greedy ears.

“ I had,” said Walter, and glanced anxiously towards his trembling agent.

“ And what became of your daughter ?”

No answer was immediately given—Walter hung his head, and seemed troubled ; he sighed deeply, and again turned his eye inquiringly to Mr Keelevin. Almost every one present sympathised with his emotion, and ascribed it to parental sorrow.

“ I say,” resumed the advocate, “ what became of your daughter ?”

“ I canna answer that question.”

The simple accent in which this was uttered interested all in his favour still more and more.

“ Is she dead ?” said the pertinacious Mr Threeper.

“ Folk said sae ; and what every body says maun be true.”

“ Then you don’t, of your own knowledge, know the fact ? ”

“ Before I can answer that, I would like to ken what a fact is ? ”

The counsel shifted his ground, without noticing the question ; and said,—

“ But I understand, Mr Walkinshaw, you have still a child that you call your Betty Bodle ? ”

“ And what business hae ye wi’ that ? ” said the natural, offended. “ I never saw sic a stock o’ impudence as ye hae in my life.”

“ I did not mean to offend you, Mr Walkinshaw ; I was only anxious, for the ends of justice, to know if you consider the child you call Betty Bodle as your daughter ? ”

“ I’m sure,” replied Walter, “ that the ends o’ justice would be meikle better served an ye would hae done wi’ your speering.”

“ It is, I must confess, strange that I cannot get a direct answer from you, Mr

Walkinshaw. Surely, as a parent, you should know your child!" exclaimed the advocate, peevishly.

"An I was a mother ye might say sae."

Mr Threeper began to feel, that, hitherto, he had made no impression; and forming an opinion of Walter's shrewdness far beyond what he was led to expect, he stooped, and conferred a short time with Mr Pitwinnoch. On resuming his wonted posture, he said,—

"I do not wish, Mr Walkinshaw, to harass your feelings; but I am not satisfied with the answer you have given respecting your child: and I beg you will be a little more explicit. Is the little girl that lives with you your daughter?"

"I dinna like to gie you any satisfaction on that head; for Mr Keelevin said, ye would bother me if I did."

"Ah!" exclaimed the triumphant advocate, "have I caught you at last?"

A murmur of disappointment ran

through all the Court ; and Walter looked around coweringly and afraid.

“ So, Mr Keelevin has primed you, has he ? He has instructed you what to say ? ”

“ No,” said the poor natural ; “ he instructed me to say nothing.”

“ Then, why did he tell you that I would bother you ? ”

“ I dinna ken, speer at himsel ; there he sits.”

“ No, Sir ! I ask you.” said the advocate, grandly.

“ I’m wearied, Mr Keelevin,” said Walter, helplessly, as he looked towards his disconsolate agent. “ May I no come away ? ”

The honest lawyer gave a deep sigh ; to which all the spectators sympathisingly responded.

“ Mr Walkinshaw,” said the Sheriff, “ don’t be alarmed—we are all friendly disposed towards you ; but it is necessary, for the satisfaction of the jury, that you

should tell us what you think respecting the child that lives with you."

Walter smiled and said, "I hae nae objection to converse wi' a weel-bred gentleman like you; but that barking terrier in the wig, I can thole him no longer."

"Well, then," resumed the judge, "is the little girl your daughter?"

"'Deed is she—my ain dochter."

"How can that be, when, as you acknowledged, every body said your dochter was dead?"

"But I kent better mysel—my bairn and dochter, ye see, Sir, was lang a weakly baby, ay bleating like a lambie that has lost its mother; and she dwin't and dwinlet, and moant and grew sleepy sleepy, and then she clos'd her wee bonny een, and lay still; and I sat beside her three days and three nights, watching her a' the time, never lifting my een frae her face, that was as sweet to look on as a gowan in a lown May morning. But I ken na how it came to pass—I thought, as I

look't at her, that she was change't, and there began to come a kirkyard smell frae the bed, that was just as if the hand o' Nature was wising me to gae away ; and then I saw, wi' the eye o' my heart, that my brother's wee Mary was grown my wee Betty Bodle, and so I gaed and brought her hame in my arms, and she is noo my dochter. But my mother has gaen on like a randy at me ever sin syne, and wants me to put away my ain bairn, which I will never, never do—No, Sir, I'll stand by her, and guard her, though fifty mothers, and fifty times fifty brother Geordies, were to flyte at me frae morning to night."

One of the jury here interposed, and asked several questions relative to the management of the estate ; by the answers to which it appeared, not only that Walter had never taken any charge whatever, but that he was totally ignorant of business, and even of the most ordinary money transactions.

The jury then turned round and laid their

heads together; the legal gentlemen spoke across the table, and Walter was evidently alarmed at the bustle.—In the course of two or three minutes, the foreman returned a verdict of Fatuity.

The poor Laird shuddered, and, looking at the Sheriff, said, in an accent of simplicity that melted every heart, “Am I found guilty?—O surely, Sir, ye’ll no hang me, for I cou’dna help it?”

CHAP. XXII.

THE scene in the parlour of Grippy, after the inquiry, was of the most solemn and lugubrious description.—The Laddy sat in the great chair, at the fire-side, in all the pomp of woe, wiping her eyes, and, ever and anon, giving vent to the deepest sighs of sorrow. Mrs Charles, with her son leaning on her knee, occupied another chair, pensive and anxious. George and Mr Pitwinnoch sat at the table, taking an inventory of the papers in the scrutoire, and Walter was playfully tickling his adopted daughter on the green before the window, when Mrs Milrookit, with her husband, the Laird of Dirdumwhamle, came to sympathise and condole with their friends, and to ascertain what would be

the pecuniary consequences of the decision to them.

“Come awa, my dear,” said the Leddy to her daughter, as she entered the room; —“Come away and tak a seat beside me. Your poor brother, Watty, has been weighed in the balance o’ the Sheriff, and found wanting; and his vessels o’ gold and silver, as I may say in the words o’ Scripture, are carried away into captivity; for I understand that George gets no proper right to them, as I expeckit, but is obligated to keep them in custody, in case Watty should hereafter come to years o’ discretion. Heh Meg! but this is a sair day for us a’—and for nane mair sae than your afflicted gude-sister there and her twa bairns. She’ll be under a needcessity to gang back and live again wi’ my mother, now in her ninety-third year, and by course o’ nature drawing near to her latter end.”

“And what’s to become of you?” replied Mrs Milrookit.

“O I’ll hae to bide here, to tak care o’

every thing ; and an aliment will be allott to me for keeping poor Watty. Hegh Sirs ! Wha would hae thought it, that sic a fine lad—as he ance was, and preferred by his honest father as the best able to keep the property right, would thus hae been, by decret o’ court, proven a born idiot ?”

“ But,” interrupted Mrs Milrookit, glancing compassionately towards her sister-in-law, “ I think, since so little change is to be made, that ye might just as weel let Bell and her bairns bide wi’ you—for my grandmother’s income is little enough for her ain wants, now that she’s in a manner bedrid.”

“ It’s easy for you, Meg, to speak,” replied her mother ;—“ but if ye had an experiment o’ the heavy handfu’ they hae been to me, ye would hae mair compassion for your mother. It’s surely a dispensation sair enough, to hae the grief and heart-breaking sight before my eyes of a demented lad, that was so long a comfort to me in my widowhood. But it’s the

Lord's will, and I maun bend the knee o' resignation."

"Is't your intent, Mr George," said the Laird o' Dirdumwhamle, "to mak any division o' what lying money there may hae been saved since your father's death?"

"I suspect there will not be enough to defray the costs of the process," replied George; "and if any balance should remain, the house really stands so much in need of repair, that I am persuaded there will not be a farthing left."

"Deed," said the Leddy, "what he says, Mr Milrookit, is oure true; the house is in a frail condition, for it was like pu'ing the teeth out o' the head o' Watty to get him to do what was needful."

"I think," replied the Laird o' Dirdumwhamle, "that since ye hae so soon come to the property, Mr George, and no likelihood o' any molestation in the possession, that ye might let us a' share and share alike o' the gethering, and be at the outlay o' the repairs frae the rental."

To this suggestion Mr George, however, replied, "It will be time enough to consider that, when the law expences are paid."

"They'll be a heavy soom, Mr Milrookit," said the Leddy; "weel do I ken frae my father's pleas what it is to pay law expences. The like o' Mr Pitwinnoch there, and Mr Keelevin, are men o' moderation and commonality in their charges—but yon awfu' folk wi' the cloaks o' darkness and the wigs o' wisdom frae Edinbro'—they are costly commodities.—But now that we're a' met here, I think it would be just as weel an we waur to settle at ance what I'm to hae, as the judicious curator o' Watty—for, by course o' law and nature, the aliment will begin frae this day."

"Yes," replied George, "I think it will be just as well; and I'm glad, mother, that you have mentioned it. What is your opinion, Mr Milrookit, as to the amount that she should have?"

“ All things considered,” replied the Laird of Dirdunwhamle, prospectively contemplating some chance of a reversionary interest to his wife in the Leddy’s savings, “ I think you ought not to make it less than a hundred pounds a-year.”

“ A hundred pounds a-year !” exclaimed the Leddy, “ that’ll no buy salt to his kail. I hope and expek no less than the whole half o’ the rents ; and they were last year weel on to four hunder.”

“ I think,” said George to Mr Pitwinnoch, “ I would not be justified to the Court were I to give any thing like that ; but if you think I may, I can have no objection to comply with my mother’s expectations.”

“ O, Mr Walkinshaw,” replied Gabriel, “ you are no at a’ aware o’ your responsibility,—you can do no such things. Your brother has been found a *fatuus*, and, of course, entitled but to the plainest maintenance. I think that you will hardly be permitted to allow his mother more than fifty pounds ; if, indeed, so much.”

“ Fifty pounds ! fifty placks,” cried the indignant Leddy. “ I’ll let baith you and the Sheriff ken I’m no to be frauded o’ my rights in that gait. I’ll no faik a farthing o’ a hundred and fifty.”

“ In that case, I fear,” said Gabriel, “ Mr George will be obliged to seek another custodier for the *fatuus*, as assuredly, Mem, he’ll ne’er be sanctioned to allow you any thing like that.”

“ If ye think sae,” interposed Mrs Milrookit, compassionating the forlorn estate of her sister-in-law,—“ I dare say Mrs Charles will be content to take him at a very moderate rate.”

“ Megsty me !” exclaimed the Leddy. “ Hae I been buying a pig in a pock like that? Is’t a possibility that he can be ta’en out o’ my hands, and no reasonable allowance made to me at a’ ? Surely, Mr Pitwinnoch, surely, Geordie, this can never stand either by the laws of God or man.”

“ I can assure you, Mrs Walkinshaw,” replied the lawyer, “ that fifty pounds a-

year is as much as I could venture to advise Mr George to give ; and seeing it is sae, you had as well agree to it at once."

" I'll never agree to ony such thing." I'll gang intil Embro mysel, and hae justice done me frae the Fifteen. I'll this very night consult Mr Keelevin, who is a most just man, and o' a right partiality."

" I hope, mother," said George, " that you and I will not cast out about this ; and to end all debates, if ye like, we'll leave the aliment to be settled by Mr Pitwinnoch and Mr Keelevin."

" Nothing can be fairer," observed the Laird of Dirdumwhamle, in the hope Mr Keelevin might be so wrought on as to insist, that at least a hundred should be allowed ; and after some further altercation, the Leddy grudgingly assented to this proposal."

" But," said Mrs Milrookit, " considering now the altered state of Watty's circumstances, I dinna discern how it is possible

for my mother to uphold this house and the farm ?”

The Liddy looked a little aghast at this fearful intimation, while George replied,—

“ I have reflected on that, Margaret, and I am quite of your opinion ; and, indeed, it is my intention, after the requisite repairs are done to the house, to flit my family ; for I am in hopes the change of air will be advantageous to my wife’s health.”

The Liddy was thunderstruck, and unable to speak ; but her eyes were eloquent with indignation.

“ Perhaps, after all, it would be as well for our mother,” continued George, “ to take up house at once in Glasgow ; and as I mean to settle an annuity of fifty pounds on Mrs Charles, they could not do better than all live together.”

All present but his mother applauded the liberality of George. To the young widow the intelligence of such a settlement was as fresh air to the captive ; but

before she could express her thankfulness, Leddy Grippy started up, and gave a tremendous stamp with her foot. She then resumed her seat, and appeared all at once calm and smiling; but it was a calm betokening no tranquillity, and a smile expressive of as little pleasure. In the course of a few seconds the hurricane burst forth, and alternately, with sobs and supplications, menaces, and knocking of nieves, and drumming with her feet, the hapless Leddy Grippy divulged and expatiated on the plots and devices of George. But all was of no avail—her destiny was sealed; and long before Messrs Keelevin and Pitwinnoch adjusted the amount of the allowance, which, after a great struggle on the part of the former, was settled at seventy-five pounds, she found herself under the painful necessity of taking a flat up a turnpike stair in Glasgow, for herself and the *fatuus*.

CHAP. XXIII.

FOR some time after the decision of Walter's fatuity, nothing important occurred in the history of the Grippy family. George pacified his own conscience, and gained the approbation of the world, by fulfilling the promise of settling fifty pounds per annum on his sister-in-law. The house was enlarged and adorned, and the whole estate, under the ancient name of Kittlestonheugh, began to partake of that general spirit of improvement which was then gradually diffusing itself over the face of the west country.

In the meantime, Mrs Charles Walkinshaw, who had returned with her children to reside with their grandmother, found her situation comparatively comfortable; but an acute anxiety for the consequences

that would ensue by the daily expected death of that gentlewoman, continued to thrill through her bosom, and chequer the sickly gleam of the uncertain sunshine that glimmered in her path. At last the old lady died, and she was reduced, as she had long foreseen, with her children, to the parsimonious annuity. As it was impossible for her to live in Glasgow, and educate her children, on so small a stipend, there, she retired to one of the neighbouring villages, where, in the family of the Reverend Mr Eadie, the minister, she found that kind of quiet intelligent society which her feelings and her misfortunes required.

Mrs Eadie was a Highland lady, and, according to the living chronicles of the region of clans and traditions, she was of scarcely less than illustrious birth. But for the last attempt to restore the royal line of the Stuarts, she would, in all probability, have moved in a sphere more spacious and suitable to the splendour of

her pedigree than the humble and narrow orbit of a country clergyman's wife. Nor in her appearance did it seem that Nature and Fortune were agreed about her destiny ; for the former had adorned her youth with the beauty, the virtues, and the dignity, which command admiration in the palace,—endowments but little consonant to the lowly duties of the rural manse.

At the epoch of which we are now speaking she was supposed to have passed her fiftieth year ; but something in her air and manner gave her the appearance of being older—a slight shade of melancholy, the pale cast of thought, lent sweetness to the benign composure of her countenance ; and she was seldom seen without inspiring interest, and awakening sentiments of profound and reverential respect. She had lost her only daughter about a year before ; and a son, her remaining child, a boy about ten years of age, was supposed to have inherited the malady which carried off his sister. The

anxiety which Mrs Eadie, in consequence, felt as a mother, partly occasioned that mild sadness of complexion to which we have alluded ; but there was still a deeper and more affecting cause.

Before the ruin of her father's fortune, by the part he took in the Rebellion, she was betrothed to a youth who united many of the best Lowland virtues with the gallantry and enthusiasm peculiar to the Highlanders of that period. It was believed that he had fallen in the fatal field of Culloden ; and, after a long period of virgin widowhood, on his account, she was induced, by the amiable manners and gentle virtues of Mr Eadie, to consent to change her life. He was then tutor in the family of a relation, with whom, on her father's forfeiture and death, she had found an asylum,—and when he was presented to the parish of Camrachle, they were married.

The first seven years, from the date of their union, were spent in that temperate

state of enjoyment which is the nearest to perfect happiness ; during the course of which their two children were born. In that time no symptom of the latent poison of the daughter's constitution appeared ; but all around them, and in their prospects, was calm, and green, and mild, and prosperous.

In the course of the summer of the eighth year, in consequence of an often repeated invitation, they went, at the meeting of the General Assembly, to which Mr Eadie was returned a member, to spend a short time with a relation in Edinburgh, and among the strangers with whom they happened to meet at the houses of their friends were several from France, children and relations of some of those who had been out in the Forty-five.

A young gentleman belonging to these expatriated visitors, one evening interested Mrs Eadie, to so great a degree, that she requested to be particularly introduced to him, and, in the course of conver-

sation, she learnt that he was the son of her former lover, and that his father was still alive, and married to a French woman, his mother. The shock which this discovery produced was so violent that she was obliged to leave the room, and falling afterwards into bad health, her singular beauty began to fade with premature decay.

Her husband, to whom she disclosed her grief, endeavoured to soften it by all the means and blandishments in his power ; but it continued so long inveterate, that he, yielded himself to the common weakness of our nature, and growing peevish at her sorrow, chided her melancholy till their domestic felicity was mournfully impaired.

Such was the state in which Mrs Charles Walkinshaw found Mrs Eadie at their first acquaintance ; and the disappointments and shadows which had fallen on the hopes of her own youth, soon led to an intimate and sympathetic friendship between them, the influence of which contributed at once to alleviate their reciprocal griefs, and to have

the effect of reviving, in some degree, the withered affections of the minister. The gradual and irremediable progress of the consumption which preyed on his son, soon, however, claimed from that gentle and excellent man efforts of higher fortitude than he had before exerted, and from that inward exercise, and the sympathy which he felt for his wife's maternal solicitude, Mrs Walkinshaw had the satisfaction, in the course of a year, to see their mutual confidence and cordiality restored. But in the same period the boy died; and though the long foreseen event deeply affected his parents, it proved a fortunate occurrence to the widow. For the minister, to withdraw his reflections from the contemplation of his childless state, undertook the education of James, and Mrs Eadie, partly from the same motives, but chiefly to enjoy the society of her friend, proposed to unite with her in the education of Mary. "We cannot tell," said she to Mrs Walkinshaw, "what her lot may be; but let us do our best to prepare her for the

world, and leave her fortunes, as they ever must be, in the hands of Providence. The penury and obscurity of her present condition ought to be no objection to bestowing on her all the accomplishments we have it in our power to give. How little likely was it, in my father's time, that I should have been in this comparative poverty, and yet, but for those acquirements, which were studied for brighter prospects, how dark and sad would often have been my residence in this sequestered village?"

CHAP. XXIV.

IN the meantime, the fortunes of George, whom we now regard as the third Laird of Grippy, continued to flourish. The estate rose in value, and his mercantile circumstances improved; but still the infirmities of his wife's health remained the same, and the want of a male heir was a craving void in his bosom, that no prosperity could supply.

The reflections, connected with this subject, were rendered the more afflicting, by the consideration, that, in the event of dying without a son, the estate would pass from his daughter to James, the son of his brother Charles—and the only consolation that he had to balance this was a hope that, perhaps, in time he might be able to bring to pass a marriage between them.

Accordingly, after a suspension of intercourse for several years, actuated by a perspective design of this kind, he, one afternoon, made his appearance in his own carriage, with his lady and daughter, at the door of Mrs Charles' humble dwelling, in the village of Camrackle.

“ I am afraid,” said he, after they were all seated in her little parlour, the window of which was curtained without with honeysuckle and jessamine—and the grate filled with flowers ;—“ I am afraid, my dear sister, unless we occasionally renew our intercourse, that the intimacy will be lost between our families, which it ought to be the interest of friends to preserve. Mrs Walkinshaw and I have, therefore, come to request that you and the children will spend a few days with us at Kittlestonheugh, and if you do not object, we shall invite our mother and Walter to join you—you would be surprised to hear how much the poor fellow still dotes on the recollection of your Mary, as Betty Bodle, and bewails, be-

cause the law, as he says, has found him guilty of being daft, that he should not be allowed to see her."

This visit and invitation were so unexpected, that even Mrs Charles, who was of the most gentle and confiding nature, could not avoid suspecting they were dictated by some unexplained purpose; but adversity had long taught her that she was only as a reed in the world, and must stoop as the wind blew. She, therefore, readily agreed to spend a few days at the mansion-house, and the children who were present, eagerly expressing a desire to see their uncle Walter, of whose indulgence and good nature they retained the liveliest recollection, it was arranged that, on the Monday following, the carriage should be sent for her and them, and that the Lady and Walter should also be at Kittlestonheugh to meet them.

In the evening after this occurrence, Mrs Charles went to the manse, and communicated to the minister and Mrs Eadie

what had happened. They knew her story, and were partly acquainted with the history of the strange and infatuated Entail. Like her, they believed that her family had been entirely cut off from the succession, and, like her too, they respected the liberality of George, in granting her the annuity, small as it was. His character, indeed, stood fair and honourable with the world; he was a partner in one of the most eminent concerns in the royal city; his birth and the family estate placed him in the first class of her sons and daughters, that stately class who, though entirely devoted to the pursuit of lucre, still held their heads high as ancestral gentry. But after a suspension of intercourse for so long a period, so sudden a renewal of intimacy, and with a degree of cordiality never before evinced, naturally excited their wonder, and awakened their conjectures. Mrs Eadie, superior and high-minded herself, ascribed it to the best intentions. "Your brother-in-law," said

she, “ is feeling the generous influence of prosperity, and is sensible that it must redound to his personal advantage with the world to continue towards you, on an enlarged scale, that friendship which you have already experienced.’

But the minister, who, from his humbler birth, and the necessity which it imposed on him to contemplate the movements of society from below, together with that acquired insight of the hidden workings of the heart, occasionally laid open in the confessional moments of contrition, when his assistance was required at the deathbeds of his parishioners, appeared to entertain a different opinion.

“ I hope his kindness proceeds,” said he, “ from so good a source ; but I should have been better satisfied had it run in a constant stream, and not, after such an entire occultation, burst forth so suddenly. It is either the result of considerations with respect to things already past, recently impressed upon him, in some new man-

ner, or springs from some sinister purpose that he has in view ; and, therefore, Mrs Walkinshaw, though it may seem harsh in me to suggest so ill a return for such a demonstration of brotherly regard, I would advise you, on account of your children, to observe to what it tends."

In the meantime, George, with his lady and daughter, had proceeded to his mother's residence in Virginia Street, to invite her and Walter to join Mrs Charles and the children.

His intercourse with her, after her domestication in the town had been established, was restored to the freest footing ; for although, in the first instance, and in the most vehement manner, she declared, " He had cheated her, and deprived Walter of his lawful senses ; and that she ne'er would open her lips to him again," he had, nevertheless, contrived to make his peace, by sending her presents, and paying her the most marked deference and respect ; lamenting that the hard conditions of his si-

tuation as a trustee did not allow him to be in other respects more liberal. But still the embers of suspicion were not extinguished; and when, on this occasion, he told her where he had been, and the immediate object of his visit, she could not refrain from observing, that it was a very wonderful thing.

“ Dear keep me, Geordie !” said she, “ what’s in the wind noo, that ye hae been galloping awa in your new carriage to invite Bell Fatherlans and her weans to Grippy ?”

George, eager to prevent her observations, interrupted her, saying,—

“ I am surprised, mother, that you still continue to call the place Grippy. You know it is properly Kittlestonheugh.”

“ To be sure,” replied the Leddy, “ since my time and your worthy father’s time, it has undergone a great transmogrification; what wi’ your dining-rooms, and what wi’ your drawing-rooms, and your new back jams and your wings.”

“ Why,” mother, I have but as yet built only one of the wings,” said he.

“ And enough too,” exclaimed the Leddy. “ Geordie, tak my word for’t, it’ll a’ flee fast enough away wi’ ae wing. Hows- ever, I’ll no objek to the visitation, for I hae had a sort o’ wis to see my grand- childer, which is very natural I shou’d hae. Nae doot, by this time they are grown braw bairns ; and their mother was ay a genty bodie, though, in a sense, mair for ornament than use.”

Walter, who, during this conversation, was sitting in his father’s easy chair, that had, among other chattels, been removed from Grippy,—swinging backward and forwards, and occasionally throwing glances towards the visitors, said,—

“ And is my Betty Bodle to be there ?”

“ O, yes,” replied George, glad to escape from his mother’s remarks ; “ and you’ll be quite delighted to see her. She is uncommonly tall for her age.”

“ I dinna like that,” said Walter ; “ she

should na hae grown ony bigger,—for I dinna like big folk.”

“ And why not ? ”

“ ’Cause ye ken, Geordie, the law’s made only for them ; and if you and me had ay been twa wee brotherly laddies, playing on the gowany brae, as we used to do, ye would ne’er hae thought o’ bringing yon Cluty’s claw frae Enbro’ to prove me guilty o’ daftness.”

“ I’m sure, Watty,” said George, under the twinge which he suffered from the observation, “ that I could not do otherwise. It was required from me equally by what was due to the world and to my mother.”

“ It may be sae,” replied Walter ; “ but, as I’m daft, ye ken I dinna understand it ; ” and he again resumed his oscillations.

After some further conversation on the subject of the proposed visit, in which George arranged that he should call on Monday for his mother and Walter in the carriage, and take them out to the country with him, he took his leave.

CHAP. XXV.

ON the same evening on which George and his family visited Mrs Charles at Camrachle, and while she was sitting in the manse parlour, Mrs Eadie received a letter by the post. It was from her cousin Frazer, who, as heir-male of Frazer of Glengael, her father's house, would, but for the forfeiture, have been his successor, and it was written to inform her, that, among other forfeited properties, the Glengael estate was to be soon publicly sold, and that he was making interest, according to the custom of the time, and the bearing in the minds of the Scottish gentry in general towards the unfortunate adherents of the Stuarts, to obtain a private preference at the sale ; also begging that she would come to Edinburgh and assist him

in the business, some of their mutual friends and relations having thought that, perhaps, she might herself think of concerting the means to make the purchase.

At one time, undoubtedly, the hereditary affections of Mrs Eadie would have prompted her to have made the attempt; but the loss of her children extinguished all the desire she had ever cherished on the subject, and left her only the wish that her kinsman might succeed. Nevertheless, she was too deeply under the influence of the clannish sentiments peculiar to the Highlanders, not to feel that a compliance with Frazer's request was a duty. Accordingly, as soon as she read the letter, she handed it to her husband, at the same time saying,—

“ I am glad that this has happened when we are about to lose for a time the society of Mrs Walkinshaw. We shall set out for Edinburgh on Monday, the day she leaves this, and perhaps we may be able to return about the time she expects to be

back. "For I feel," she added, turning towards her, "that your company has become an essential ingredient to our happiness."

Mr Eadie was so much surprised at the decision with which his wife spoke, and the firmness with which she proposed going to Edinburgh, without reference to what he might be inclined to do, that, instead of reading the letter, he looked at her anxiously for a moment, perhaps recollecting the unpleasant incident of their former visit to the metropolis, and said, "What has occurred?"

"Glengael is to be sold," she replied, "and my cousin, Frazer, is using all the influence he can to prevent any one from bidding against him. Kindness towards me deters some of our mutual friends from giving him their assistance; and he wishes my presence in Edinburgh to remove their scruples, and otherwise to help him."

"You can do that as well by letter as in person," said the minister, opening the let-

ter; "for, indeed, this year we cannot so well afford the expences of such a journey."

"The honour of my father's house is concerned in this business," replied the lady, calmly but proudly; "and there is no immediate duty to interfere with what I owe to my family as the daughter of Glen-gael."

Mrs Walkinshaw had, from her first interview, admired the august presence and lofty sentiments of Mrs Eadie; but nothing had before occurred to afford her even a glimpse of her dormant pride and sleeping energies, the sinews of a spirit capable of heroic and masculine effort; and she felt for a moment awed by the incidental disclosure of a power and resolution, that she had never once imagined to exist beneath the calm and equable sensibility which constituted the general tenor of her friend's character.

When the minister had read the letter, he again expressed his opinion that it was

unnecessary to go to Edinburgh ; but Mrs Eadie, without entering into any observation on his argument, said,—

“ On second thoughts, it may not be necessary for you to go—but I must. I am summoned by my kinsman ; and it is not for me to question the propriety of what he asks, but only to obey. It is the cause of my father’s house.”

The minister smiled at her determination, and said, “ I suppose there is nothing else for me but also to obey. I do not, however, recollect who this Frazer is—Was he out with your father in the Forty-five ?”

“ No ; but his father was,” replied Mrs Eadie, “ and was likewise executed at Carlisle. He, himself, was bred to the bar, and is an advocate in Edinburgh.” And, turning suddenly round to Mrs Walkinshaw, she added solemnly, “ There is something in this—There is some mysterious link between the fortunes of your family and mine. It has brought your brother-

in-law here to-day, as if a new era were begun to you, and also this letter of auspicious omen to the blood of Glengael."

Mr Eadie laughingly remarked, " That he had not for a long time heard from her such a burst of Highland lore."

But Mrs Walkinshaw was so affected by the solemnity with which it had been expressed, that she inadvertently said, " I hope in Heaven it may be so."

" I am persuaded it is," rejoined Mrs Eadie, still serious ; and emphatically taking her by the hand, she said, " The minister dislikes what he calls my Highland freats, and believes they have their source in some dark remnants of pagan superstition ; on that account, I abstain from speaking of many things that I see, the signs and forecoming shadows of events—nevertheless, my faith in them is none shaken, for the spirit has more faculties than the five senses, by which, among other things, the heart is taught to love or hate, it knows not wherefore—

Mark, therefore, my words, and bear them in remembrance—for this day the fortunes of Glengael are mingled with those of your house.—The lights of both have been long set; but the time is coming, when they shall again shine in their brightness.”

“ I should be incredulous no more,” replied the minister, “ if you could persuade her brother-in-law, Mr George Walkinshaw, to help Frazer with a loan towards the sum required for the purchase of Glengael.”

Perceiving, however, that he was treading too closely on a tender point, he turned the conversation, and nothing more particular occurred that evening. The interval between and Monday was occupied by the two families in little preparations for their respective journeys; Mr Eadie, notwithstanding the pecuniary inconvenience, having agreed to accompany his wife.

In the meantime, George, for some reason best known to himself, it would appear, had resolved to make the visit of so many

connections a festival ; for, on the day after he had been at Camrachle, he wrote to his brother-in-law, the Laird of Dirdunwhamle, to join the party with Mrs Milrookit, and to bring their son with them,—a circumstance which, when he mentioned it to his mother, only served to make her suspect that more was meant than met either the eye or ear in such extraordinary kindness ; and the consequence was, that she secretly resolved to take the advice of Mr Keelevin, as to how she ought to conduct herself ; for, from the time of his warsle, as she called it, with Pitwinnoch for the aliment, he had regained her good opinion. She had also another motive for being desirous of conferring with him, no less than a laudable wish to have her will made, especially as the worthy lawyer, now far declined into the vale of years, had been for some time in ill health, and unable to give regular attendance to his clients at the office : “ symptoms,” as the Leddy said when she heard it “ that he felt the cauld hand o’

Death muddling about the root o' life, and a warning to a' that wanted to profit by his skill, no to slumber and sleep like the foolish virgins, that alloo't their cruises to burn out, and were wakened to desperation, when the shout got up that the bridegroom and the musickers were coming."

But the worthy lawyer, when she called, was in no condition to attend any longer to worldly concerns,—a circumstance which she greatly deplored, as she mentioned it to her son George, who, however, was far from sympathising with her anxiety; on the contrary, the news, perhaps, afforded him particular satisfaction. For he was desirous that the world should continue to believe his elder brother had been entirely disinherited, and Mr Keelevin was the only person that he thought likely to set the heirs in that respect right.

CHAP. XXVI.

ON the day appointed, the different members of the Grippy family assembled at Kittlestonheugh. Mrs Charles and her two children were the last that arrived; and during the drive from Camrachie, both James and Mary repeated many little instances of Walter's kindness, so lasting are the impressions of affection received in the artless and heedless hours of childhood: and they again anticipated, from the recollection of his good nature, a long summer day with him of frolic and mirth.

But they were now several years older, and they had undergone that unconscious change, by which, though the stores of memory are unaltered, the moral being becomes another creature, and can no longer feel towards the same object as it once felt.

On alighting from the carriage, they bounded with light steps and jocund hearts in quest of their uncle; but, when they saw him sitting by himself in the garden, they paused, and were disappointed.

They recognised in him the same person whom they formerly knew, but they had heard he was daft; and they beheld him stooping forward, with his hands silly hanging between his knees; and he appeared melancholy and helpless.

“Uncle Watty,” said James, compassionately, “what for are ye sitting there alone?”

“Watty looked up, and gazing at him vacantly for a few seconds, said, “’Cause naebody will sit wi’ me, for I’m a daft man.” He then drooped his head, and sank into the same listless posture in which they had found him.

“Do ye no ken me?” said Mary.

“He again raised his eyes, and alternately looked at them both, eagerly and suspiciously. Mary appeared to have out-

grown his recollection, for he turned from her ; but, after some time, he began to discover James ; and a smile of curious wonder gradually illuminated his countenance, and developed itself into a broad grin of delight, as he said,—

“ What a heap o’ meat, Jamie Walkinshaw, ye maun hae eaten to mak you sic a muckle laddie ;” and he drew the boy towards him to caress him as he had formerly done ; but the child, escaping from his hands, retired several paces backward, and eyed him with pity, mingled with disgust.

Walter appeared struck with his look and movement ; and again folding his hands, dropped them between his knees, and hung his head, saying to himself,—
“ But I’m daft ; naebody cares for me noo ; I’m a cumberer o’ the ground, and a’, my Betty Bodles are ta’en away.”

The accent in which this was expressed touched the natural tenderness of the little girl ; and she went up to him, and said,—

“Uncle, I’m your wee Betty Bodle; what for will ye no speak to me?”

His attention was again roused, and he took her by the hand, and, gently stroking her head, said, “Ye’re a bonny flower, a lily-like leddy, and leil in the heart and kindly in the e’e; but ye’re no my Betty Bodle.” Suddenly, however, something in the cast of her countenance reminded him so strongly of her more childish appearance, that he caught her in his arms, and attempted to dandle her; but the action was so violent that it frightened the child, and she screamed, and struggling out of his hands, ran away. James followed her; and their attention being soon drawn to other objects, poor Walter was left neglected by all during the remainder of the forenoon.

At dinner he was brought in and placed at the table, with one of the children on each side; but he paid them no attention.

“What’s come o’er thee, Watty?” said his mother. “I thought ye would hae been

out o' the body wi' your Betty Bodle ; but ye ne'er let on ye see her."

" 'Cause she's like a' the rest," said he sorrowfully. " She canna abide me ; for ye ken I'm daft—It's surely an awfu' leprosy this daftness, that it gars every body flee me ; but I canna help it—It's no my fau't, but the Maker's that made me, and the laws that found me guilty. But, Geordie," he added, turning to his brother, " What's the use o' letting me live in this world, doing nothing, and gude for naething?"

Mrs Charles felt her heart melt within her at the despondency with which this was said, and endeavoured to console him ; he, however, took no notice of her attentions, but sat seemingly absorbed in melancholy, and heedless to the endeavours which even the compassionate children made to induce him to eat.

" No," said he ; " I'll no eat ony mair—it's even down wastrie for sic a useless set-by thing as the like o' me to consume the fruits o' the earth. The cost o' my

keep would be a braw thing to Bell Fatherlans, so I hope, Geordie, ye'll mak it o'er to her ; for when I gae hame I'll lie doun and die."

" Haud thy tongue, and no fright folk wi' sic blethers," exclaimed his mother ; " but eat your dinner, and gang out to the green and play wi' the weans."

" An I were na a daft creature, naebody would bid me play wi' weans—and the weans ken that I am sae, and mak a fool o' me for't—I dinna like to be every body's fool. I'm sure the law, when it found me guilty, might hae alloot me a mair merciful punishment. Meg Wilcat, that stealt Provost Murdoch's cocket-hat, and was whippit for't at the Cross, was pitied wi' many a watery e'e ; but every body dauds and dings the daft Laird o' Grippy."

" Na ! as I'm to be trusted," exclaimed the Leddy, " if I dinna think, Geordie, that the creature's coming to its senses again ;" and she added laughing, " and what will come o' your braw policy, and

your planting and plenishing? for ye'll hae to gie't back, and count in the Court to the last bawbee for a' the rental besides."

George was never more at a loss than for an answer to parry this thrust; but, fortunately for him, Walter rose and left the room, and, as he had taken no dinner, his mother followed to remonstrate with him against the folly of his conduct. Her exhortations and her menaces were, however, equally ineffectual; the poor natural was not to be moved; he felt his own despised and humiliated state; and the expectation which he had formed of the pleasure he was to enjoy, in again being permitted to caress and fondle his Betty Bodle, was so bitterly disappointed, that it cut him to the heart. No persuasion, no promise, could entice him to return to the dining-room; but a settled and riveted resolution to go back to Glasgow obliged his mother to desist, and allow him to take his own way. He accordingly

law towards her son, and that he took particular pains to make the boy attentive to Robina, as his daughter was called. Indeed, the design of George was so obvious, and the whole proceedings of the day so peculiarly marked, that even the Leddy could not but observe them.

“ I’m thinking,” said she, “ that the seeds of a matrimony are sown among us this day, for Geordie’s a far-before looking soothsayer, and a Chaldee excellence like his father ; and a bodie does na need an e’e in the neck to discern that he’s just wising and wiling for a purpose of marriage hereafter between Jamie and Beenie. Gude speed the wark ! for really we hae had but little luck among us since the spirit o’ disinheritance got the upper hand ; and it would be a great comfort if a’ sores could be salved and healed in the fulness of time, when the weans can be married according to law.”

“ I do assure you, mother,” replied her dutiful son, “ that nothing would give me

greater pleasure ; and I hope, that, by the frequent renewal of these little cordial and friendly meetings, we may help forward so desirable an event."

" But," replied the old Leddy piously, " marriages are made in Heaven ; and, unless there has been a booking among the angels above, a' that can be done by man below, even to the crying, for the third and last time, in the kirk, will be only a thrashing the water and a raising of bells. Howsever, the prayers of the righteous availeth much ; and we should a' endeavour, by our walk and conversation, to compass a work so meet for repentance until it's brought to a come-to-pass. So I hope, Bell Fatherlans, that ye'll up and be doing in this good work, watching and praying, like those who stand on the tower of Siloam looking towards Lebanon."

" I think," said Mrs Charles ~~spilling~~, " that you are looking far forward. The children are still but mere weans, and

quitted the house, and immediately on arriving at home went to bed. Overpowered by the calls of hunger, he was next day allured to take some food ; and from day to day after, for several years, he was in the same manner tempted to eat ; but all power of volition, from the period of the visit, appeared to have become extinct within him. His features suffered a melancholy change, and he never spoke—nor did he seem to recognize any one ; but gradually, as it were, the whole of his mind and intellect ebbed away, leaving scarcely the merest instincts of life. But the woeful form which Nature assumes in the death-bed of fatuity admonishes us to draw the curtain over the last scene of poor Watty.

CHAP. XXVII.

IN the foregoing Chapter we were led, by our regard for the simple affections and harmless character of the second Laird, to overstep a period of several years. We must now, in consequence, return, and resume the narrative from the time that Walter retired from the company; but, without entering too minutely into the other occurrences of the day, we may be allowed to observe, in the sage words of the Leddy, that the party enjoyed themselves with as much insipidity as is commonly found at the formal feasts of near relations.

Mrs Charles Walkinshaw, put on her guard by the conjectures of the minister of Cairrachle, soon perceived an evident partiality on the part of her brother-in-

law towards her son, and that he took particular pains to make the boy attentive to Robina, as his daughter was called. Indeed, the design of George was so obvious, and the whole proceedings of the day so peculiarly marked, that even the Leddy could not but observe them.

“ I’m thinking,” said she, “ that the seeds of a matrimony are sown among us this day, for Geordie’s a far-before looking soothsayer, and a Chaldee excellence like his father ; and a bodie does na need an e’e in the neck to discern that he’s just wising and wiling for a purpose of marriage hereafter between Jamie and Beenie. Gude speed the wark ! for really we hae had but little luck among us since the spirit o’ disinheritance got the upper hand ; and it would be a great comfort if a’ sores could be salved and healed in the fulness of time, when the weans can be married according to law.”

“ I do assure you, mother,” replied her dutiful son, “ that nothing would give me

greater pleasure ; and I hope, that, by the frequent renewal of these little cordial and friendly meetings, we may help forward so desirable an event."

" But," replied the old Leddy piously, " marriages are made in Heaven ; and, unless there has been a booking among the angels above, a' that can be done by man below, even to the crying, for the third and last time, in the kirk, will be only a thrashing the water and a raising of bells. Howsever, the prayers of the righteous availeth much ; and we should a' endeavour, by our walk and conversation, to compass a work so meet for repentance until it's brought to a come-to-pass. So I hope, Bell Fatherlans, that ye'll up and be doing in this good work, watching and praying, like those who stand on the tower of Siloam looking ; towards Lebanon."

" I think," said Mrs Charles ^{spilling}, " that you are looking far forward. The children are still but mere weans, and

many a day must pass over their green heads before such a project ought even to be thought of."

"It's weel kent, Bell," replied her mother-in-law, "that ye were ne'er a queen of Sheba, either for wisdom or forethought; but I hae heard my friend that's awa—your worthy father, Geordie—often say, that as the twig is bent the tree's inclined, which is a fine sentiment, and should teach us to set about our undertakings with a knowledge of better things than of silver and gold, in order that we may be enabled to work the work o' Providence."

But just as the Leddy was thus expatiating away in high solemnity, a dreadful cry arose among the pre-ordained lovers. The children had quarrelled; and, notwithstanding all the admonitions which they had received to be kind to one another, Miss Robina had given James a slap on the face, which he repaid with such instantaneous energy, that, during the re-

mainder of the visit, they were never properly reconciled.

Other causes were also in operation destined to frustrate the long-forecasting prudence of her father. Mr and Mrs Eadie, on their arrival at Edinburgh, took up their abode with her relation Mr Frazer, the intending purchaser of Glengael; and they had not been many days in his house, till they came to the determination to adopt Ellen, his eldest daughter, who was then about the age of James. Accordingly, after having promoted the object of their journey, when they returned to the manse of Camrachie, they were allowed to take Ellen with them; and the intimacy which arose among the children in the progress of time ripened into love between her and James. For although his uncle, in the prosecution of his own purpose, often invited the boy to spend several days together with his cousin at Kittlestonheugh, and did every thing in his power during those visits to inspire

the children with a mutual affection, their distaste for each other seemed only to increase.

Robina was sly and demure, observant, quiet, and spiteful. Ellen, on the contrary, was full of buoyancy and glee, playful and generous, qualities which assimilated much more with the dispositions of James than those of his cousin, so that, long before her beauty had awakened passion, she was to him a more interesting and delightful companion.

The amusements, also, at Camrackle, were more propitious to the growth of affection than those at Kittlestonheugh, where every thing was methodized into system, and where, if the expression may be allowed, the genius of design and purpose controlled and repressed nature. The lawn was preserved in a state of neatness too trim for the gambols of childhood ; and the walks were too winding for the straightforward impulses of its freedom and joy. At Camrackle the fields were open, and

their expanse unbounded. The sun, James often thought, shone brighter there than at Kittlestonheugh ; the birds sung sweeter in the wild broom than in his uncle's shrubbery, and the moonlight glittered like gladness in the burns ; but on the wide water of the Clyde it was always dull and silent.

There are few situations more congenial to the diffusion of tenderness and sensibility—the elements of affection—than the sunny hills and clear waters of a rural neighbourhood, and few of all the beautiful scenes of Scotland excel the environs of Camrachie. The village stands on the slope of a gentle swelling ground, and consists of a single row of scattered thatched cottages, behind which a considerable stream carries its tributary waters to the Cart. On the east end stands the little church, in the centre of a small cemetery, and close to it the modest mansion of the minister. The house which Mrs Walkinshaw occupied was a slated cottage near the manse. It

was erected by a native of the village, who had made a moderate competency as a tradesman in Glasgow; and, both in point of external appearance and internal accommodation, it was much superior to any other of the same magnitude in the parish. A few ash trees rose among the gardens, and several of them were tufted with the nests of magpies, the birds belonging to which had been so long in the practice of resorting there, that they were familiar to all the children of the village.

But the chief beauty in the situation of Camrackle is a picturesque and extensive bank, shaggy with hazel, along the foot of which runs the stream already mentioned. The green and gowany brow of this romantic terrace commands a wide and splendid view of all the champaign district of Renfrewshire. And it was often observed, by the oldest inhabitants, that whenever any of the natives of the clachan had been long absent, the first spot they visited on their return was the crown

of this bank, where they had spent the sunny days of their childhood. Here the young Walkinshaws and Ellen Frazer also instinctively resorted, and their regard for each other was not only ever after endeared by the remembrance of their early pastimes there, but associated with delightful recollections of glorious summer sunshine, the fresh green mornings of spring, and the golden evenings of autumn.

CHAP. XXVIII.

As James approached his fourteenth year, his uncle, still with a view to a union with Robina, proposed, that, when Mr Eadie thought his education sufficient for the mercantile profession, he should be sent to his counting-house. But the early habits and the tenor of the lessons he had received were not calculated to insure success to James as a merchant. He was robust, handsome, and adventurous, fond of active pursuits, and had imbibed, from the Highland spirit of Mrs Eadie, a tinge of romance and enthusiasm. The bias of his character, the visions of his reveries, and the cast of his figure and physiognomy, were decidedly military. But the field of heroic enterprise was then vacant,—the American war was over, and all Europe slumbered in

repose, unconscious of the hurricane that was then gathering; and thus, without any consideration of his own inclinations and instincts, James, like many of those who afterwards distinguished themselves in the great conflict, acceded to the proposal.

He had not, however, been above three or four years settled in Glasgow when his natural distaste for sedentary and regular business began to make him dislike the place; and his repugnance was heightened almost to disgust by the discovery of his uncle's sordid views with respect to him; nor, on the part of his cousin, was the design better relished; for, independent of an early and ungracious antipathy, she had placed her affections on another object; and more than once complained to the old Leddy of her father's tyranny in so openly urging on a union that would render her miserable, especially, as she said, when her cousin's attachment to Ellen Frazer was so unequivocal. But Leddy Grippy had set her mind on the

match as strongly as her son ; and, in consequence, neither felt nor showed any sympathy for Robina.

“ Never fash your head,” she said to her one day, when the young lady was soliciting her mediation,—“ Never fash your head, Beenie, my dear, about Jamie’s calf-love for yon daffodil ; but be an obedient child, and walk in the paths of pleasantness that ye’re ordain’t to, both by me and your father ; for we hae had oure lang a divided family ; and it’s full time we were brought to a cordial understanding with one another.”

“ But,” replied the disconsolate damsel, “ even though he had no previous attachment, I’ll ne’er consent to marry him, for really I can never fancy him.”

“ And what for can ye no fancy him ?” cried the Leddy—“ I would like to ken what ? But, to be plain wi’ you, Beenie, it’s a shame to hear a weel educated miss like you, brought up wi’ a Christian principle, speaking about fancying young men.

Sic a thing was never alloo't nor heard tell o' in my day and generation. But that comes o' your ganging to see Douglas tragedy, at that kirk o' Satan in Dunlop Street ; where, as I am most creditably informed, the play-actors court ane another afore a' the folk."

" I am sure you have yourself experienced," replied Robina, " what it is to entertain a true affection, and to know that our wishes and inclinations are not under our own control.—How would you have liked had your father forced you to marry a man against your will?"

" Lassie, lassie !" exclaimed the Laddy, " if ye live to be a grandmother like me, ye'll ken the right sense o' a lawful and tender affection. But there's no sincerity noo like the auld sincerity, when me and your honest grandfather, that was in mine, and is noo in Abraham's bosom, came thegither—we had no foistring and parley-voing, like your novelle turtle-doves—but discoursed in a sober and wise-like

manner anent the cost and charge o' a family ; and the upshot was a visibility of solid cordiality and kindness, very different, Beenie, my dear, frae the puff-paste love o' your Clarissy Harlots."

" Ah ! but your affection was mutual from the beginning—you were not perhaps devoted to another ?"

" Gude guide us, Beenie Walkinshaw ! are ye devoted to another ?—Damon and Phillis, pastorauling at hide and seek wi' their sheep, was the height o' discretion, compared wi' sic curdooing. My lass, I'll let no grass grow beneath my feet, till I hae gi'en your father notice o' this loup-the-window, and hey cockalorum-like love."

" Impossible !" exclaimed the young lady ; " you will never surely be so rash as to betray me ?"

" Wha is't wi' ? But I need na speer ; for I'll be none surprised to hear that it's a play-actor, or a soldier officer, or some other clandestine poetical."

Miss possessed more shrewdness than

her grandmother gave her credit for, and perceiving the turn and tendency of their conversation, she exerted all her address to remove the impression which she had thus produced, by affecting to laugh, saying,—

“What has made you suppose that I have formed any improper attachment? I was only anxious that you should speak to my father, and try to persuade him that I can never be happy with my cousin.”

“How can I persuade him o’ ony sic havers? or how can ye hope that I would if it was in my power—when ye know what a comfort it will be to us a’, to see such a prudent purpose o’ marriage brought to perfection?—Na, na, Beenie, ye’re an instrument in the hands o’ Providence to bring about a great blessing to your family; and I would be as daft as your uncle Watty, when he gaed out to shoot the flees, were I to set mysel an adversary to such a righteous ordinance—so you maun just mak up your mind to conform. My

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remained to make her suspect it really contained more than was intended to have been conveyed. But, to avoid unnecessary disturbance, she resolved to give her son a hint to observe the motions of his daughter, while, at the same time, she also determined to ascertain how far there was any ground to suppose that from the attachment of James to Ellen Frazer, there was reason to apprehend that he might likewise be as much averse to the projected marriage as Robina. And with this view she sent for him that evening—but what past will furnish matter for another Chapter.

CHAP. XXIX.

THE Leddy was seated at her tea-table when young Walkinshaw arrived, and, as on all occasions when she had any intention in her head, she wore an aspect pregnant with importance. She was now an old woman, and had so long survived the sorrows of her widowhood, that even the weeds were thrown aside, and she had resumed her former dresses, unchanged from the fashion in which they were originally made. Her appearance, in consequence, was at once aged and ancient.

“Come your ways, Jamie,” said she, “and draw in a chair and sit down ; but, afore doing sae, tell the lass to bring ben the treck-pot,”—which he accordingly did ; and as soon as the treck-pot, alias tea-pot, was on the board, she opened her trenches.

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“ Jamie,” she began, “ your uncle George has a great notion of you, and has done muckle for your mother, giving her, o’ his own free will, a handsome ’nuity ; by the which she has brought you, and Mary your sister, up wi’ great credit and comfort. I would therefore fain hope, that, in the way o’ gratitude, there will be no slackness on your part.”

James assured her that he had a very strong sense of his uncle’s kindness ; and that, to the best of his ability, he would exert himself to afford him every satisfaction ; but that Glasgow was not a place which he much liked, and that he would rather go abroad, and push his fortune elsewhere, than continue confined to the counting-house.

“ There’s baith sense and sadness, Jamie, in what ye say,” replied the Leddy ; “ but I won’er what ye would do abroad, when there’s sic a bein beild biggit for you at home. Ye ken, by course o’ nature, that your uncle’s ordaint to die, and that

he has *only* his ae dochter Beenie, your cousin, to inherit the braw conquest o' your worthy grandfather—the whilk, but for some mistak o' law, and the sudden o'ercome o' death amang us, would hae been yours by right o' birth. So that it's in a manner pointed out to you by the forefinger o' Providence to marry Beenie."

James was less surprised at this suggestion than the old lady expected, and said, with a degree of coolness that she was not prepared for,—

"I dare say what you speak of would not be disagreeable to my uncle, for several times he has himself intimated as much, but it is an event that can never take place."

"And what for no? I'm sure Beenie's fortune will be a better bargain than a landless lad like you can hope for at ony other hand."

"True, but I'll never marry for money."

"And what will ye marry for, then?"

exclaimed the Leddy. "Tak my word o' experience for't, my man,—a' warm down-seat's o' far mair consequence in matrimony than the silly low o' love; and think what a bonny business your father and mother made o' their gentle-shepherd-ing. But, Jamie, what's the reason ye'll no tak Beenie?—there maun surely be some because for sic unnaturality?"

"Why," said he laughing, "I think it's time enough for me yet to be dreaming o' marrying."

"That's no a satisfaction to my question; but there's ae thing I would fain gie you warning o', and that's, if ye'll no marry Beenie, I dinna think ye can hae ony farther to-look, in the way o' patronage, frae your uncle."

"Then," said James indignantly, "if his kindness is only given on such a condition as that, I ought not to receive it an hour longer."

"Here's a tap o' tow!" exclaimed the Leddy. "Aff and awa wi' you to your mo-

ther at Camrachie, and gallant about the braes and dyke-sides wi' that lang windlestrae-legget tawpie, Nell Frizel—She's the because o' your rebellion. 'Deed ye may think shame o't, Jamie ; for it's a' enough to bring disgrace on a' manner o' affection to hear what I hae heard about you and her."

" What have you heard ?" cried he, burning with wrath and indignation.

" The callan's gaun aff at the head, to look at me as if his e'en were pistols—How dare ye, Sir ?—But it's no worth my while to lose my temper wi' a creature that doesna ken the homage and honour due to his aged grandmother. However, I'll be as plain as I'm pleasant wi' you my man ; and if there's no an end soon put to your pastorauley wi' yon Highland heron, and a sedate and dutiful compliancy vouchsafed to your benefactor, uncle George, there will be news in the land or lang."

" You really place the motives of my uncle's conduct towards me in a strange

light, and you forget that Robina is perhaps as strongly averse to the connection as I am."

"So she would fain try to gar me true," replied the Leddy; "the whilk is a most mystical thing; but, poor lassie, I needna be surprised at it, when she jealouses that your affections are set on a loup-the-dyke Jenny Cameron like Nell Frizel. Hows-
ever, Jamie, no to make a confabbe about the matter, there can be no doubt if ye'll sing 'We'll gang nae mair to yon toun,' wi' your back to the manse o' Camrachie, that Beenie, who is a most sweet-tempered and obedient fine lassie, will soon be wrought into a spirit of conformity wi' her father's will and my wishes."

"I cannot but say," replied Walkinshaw, "that you consider affection as very pliant. Nor do I know why you take such liberties with Miss Frazer; who, in every respect, is infinitely superior to Robina."

"Her superior!" cried the Leddy; "but love's blin' as well as fey, or ye would as

soon think o' likening a yird tead to a patrick or a turtle-dove, as Nell Frizel to Beenie Walkinshaw. Eh man! Jamie, but ye hae a poor taste; and I may say, as the auld sang sings, 'Will ye compare a docken till a tansie?' I would na touch her wi' the tangs."

"But you know," said Walkinshaw, laughing at the excess of her contempt, "that there is no accounting for tastes."

"The crow thinks it's ain bird the whitest," replied the Leddy; "but, for ā' that, it's as black as the back o' the bress; and, therefore, I would advise you to believe me, that Nell Frizel is just as ill-far't a creature as e'er came out the Maker's hand. I hae lived threescore and fifteen years in the world, and surely, in the course o' nature, should ken by this time what beauty is, and ought to be."

How far the Leddy might have proceeded with her argument is impossible to say; for it was suddenly interrupted by her grandson bursting into an immoderate fit

of laughter, which had the effect of instantly checking her eloquence, and turning the course of her ideas and animadversions into another channel. In the course, however, of a few minutes, she returned to the charge, but with no better success ; and Walkinshaw left her, half resolved to come to some explanation on the subject with his uncle. It happened, however, that this discussion, which we have just related, took place on a Saturday night ; and the weather next day being bright and beautiful, instead of going to his uncle's at Kittlestonheugh, as he commonly did on Sunday, from the time he had been placed in the counting-house, he rose early, and walked to Camrachle, where he arrived to breakfast, and afterwards accompanied his mother and sister to church.

The conversation with the old Leddy was still ringing in his ears, and her strictures on the beauty and person of Ellen Frazer seemed so irresistibly ridiculous, when he beheld her tall and elegant figure

advancing to the minister's pew, that he could with difficulty preserve the decorum requisite to the sanctity of the place. Indeed, the effect was so strong, that Ellen herself noticed it; insomuch, that, when they met after sermon in the church-yard, she could not refrain from asking what had tickled him. Simple as the question was, and easy as the explanation might have been, he found himself, at the moment, embarrassed, and at a loss to answer her. Perhaps, had they been by themselves, this would not have happened; but Mrs Eadie, and his mother and sister, were present. In the evening, however, when he accompanied Mary and her to a walk, along the brow of the hazel bank, which overlooked the village, he took an opportunity of telling her what had passed, and of expressing his determination to ascertain how far his uncle was seriously bent on wishing him to marry Robina; protesting, at the same time, that it was a union which could never be—intermingled

with a thousand little tender demonstrations, infinitely more delightful to the ears of Ellen than it is possible to make them to our readers. Indeed, Nature plainly shows, that the conversations of lovers are not fit for the public, by the care which she takes to tell the gentle parties, that they must speak in whispers, and choose retired spots and shady bowers, and other sequestered poetical places, for their conferences.

CHAP. XXX.

THE conversations between the Leddy and her grandchildren were not of a kind to keep with her. On Monday morning she sent for her son, and, without explaining to him what had passed, cunningly began to express her doubts if ever a match would take place between James and Robina ; recommending that the design should be given up, and an attempt made to conciliate a union between his daughter and her cousin Dirdumwhamle's son, by which, as she observed, the gear would still be kept in the family.

George, however, had many reasons against the match, not only with respect to the entail, but in consideration of Dirdumwhamle having six sons by his first marriage, and four by his second, all of

whom stood between his nephew and the succession to his estate. It is, therefore, almost unnecessary to say, that he had a stronger repugnance to his mother's suggestion than if she had proposed a stranger rather than their relation.

“ But,” said he, “ what reason have you to doubt that James and Robina are not likely to gratify our hopes and wishes ? He is a very well-behaved lad ; and though his heart does not appear to lie much to the business of the counting-house, still he is so desirous, apparently, to give satisfaction, that I have no doubt in time he will acquire steadiness and mercantile habits.”

“ It would na be easy to say,” replied the Leddy, “ a’ the whys and wherefores that I hae for my suspicion. But, ye ken, if the twa hae na a right true love and kindness for ane anither, it will be á doure job to make them happy in the way o’ matrimonial felicity ; and, to be plain wi’ you, Geordie, I would be nane surprised if something had kittled between Jamie and

a Highland lassie, ane Nell Frizel, that bides wi' the new-light minister o' Camrachle."

The Laird had incidentally heard of Ellen, and once or twice, when he happened to visit his sister-in-law, he had seen her, and was struck with her beauty. But it had never occurred to him that there was any attachment between her and his nephew. The moment, however, that the Leddy mentioned her name, he acknowledged to himself its probability.

"But do you really think," said he anxiously, "that there is any thing of the sort between her and him?"

"Frae a' that I can hear, learn, and understand," replied the Leddy, "though it may na be probable-like, yet I fear it's oure true; for when he gangs to see his mother, and it's ay wi' him as wi' the saints,—'O mother dear Jerusalem, when shall I come to thee?'—I am most creditably informed that the twa do nothing but sauly forth hand in hand to walk in the

green vallies, singing, ‘ Low down in the broom,’ and ‘ Pu’ing lilies both fresh and gay,’—which is as sure a symptom o’ something very like love, as the hen’s cackle is o’ a new-laid egg.”

“ Nevertheless,” said the Laird, “ I should have no great apprehensions, especially when he comes to understand how much it is his interest to prefer Robina.”

“ That’s a’ true, Geordie ; but I hae a misdoot that a’s no right and sound wi’ her mair than wi’ him ; and when we refleck how the mim maidens now-a-days hae delivered themselves up to the Little-gude in the shape and glamour o’ novelles and Thomson’s Seasons, we need be nane surprised to fin’ Miss as headstrong in her obdooracy as the lovely young Lavinia that your sister Meg learnt to ’cite at the boarding-school.”

“ It is not likely, however,” said the Laird, “ that she has yet fixed her affections on any one ; and a very little attention on the part of James would soon over-

come any prejudice that she may happen to have formed against him,—for now, when you bring the matter to mind, I do recollect that I have more than once observed a degree of petulance and repugnance on her part.”

“ Then I mak no doot,” exclaimed the old lady, “ that she is in a begoted state to another, and it wou’d be wise to watch her. But, first and foremost, you should sift Jamie’s tender passion—that’s the novel name for calf-love ; and if it’s within the compass o’ a possibility, get the swine driven through’t, or it may work us a muckle dule, a his father’s moonlight marriage did to your ain, worthy man !—That was indeed a sair warning to us a’, and is the because to this day o’ a’ the penance o’ vexation and tribulation that me and you, Geordie, are sae obligated to dree.”

The admonition was not lost ; on the contrary, George, who was a decisive man of business, at once resolved to ascertain

whether there were indeed any reasonable grounds for his mother's suspicions. For this purpose, on returning to the counting-house, he requested Walkinshaw to come in the evening to Kittlestonheugh, as he had something particular to say. The look and tone with which the communication was made convinced James that he could not be mistaken with respect to the topic intended, which, he conjectured, was connected with the conversation he had himself held with the Liddy on the preceding Saturday evening ; and it ~~was~~ the more agreeable to him, as he was anxious to be relieved from the doubts which began to trouble him regarding the views and motives of his uncle's partiality. For, after parting from Ellen, he had, in the course of his walk back to Glasgow, worked himself up into a determination to quit the place, if any hope of the suggested marriage with Robina was the tenure by which he held her father's favour. His mind, in consequence, as he went to Kit-

tlestonheugh in the evening, was occupied with many plans and schemes—the vague and aimless projects which fill the imagination of youth, when borne forward either by hopes or apprehensions. Indeed, the event contemplated, though it was still contingent on the spirit with which his uncle might receive his refusal, he yet, with the common precipitancy of youth, anticipated as settled, and his reflections were accordingly framed and modified by that conclusion. To leave Glasgow was determined; but where to go, and what to do, were points not so easily arranged; and ever and anon the image of Ellen Frazer rose in all the radiance of her beauty, like the angel to Balaam, and stood between him and his purpose.

The doubts, the fears, and the fondness, which alternately predominated in his bosom, received a secret and sympathetic energy from the appearance and state of external nature. The weather was cloudy but not lowering—a strong tempest seem-

ed, however, to be raging at a distance ; and several times he paused and looked back at the enormous masses of dark and troubled vapour, which were drifting along the whole sweep of the northern horizon, from Ben Lomond to the Ochils, as if some awful burning was laying waste the world beyond them ; while a long and splendid stream of hazy sunshine, from behind the Cowal mountains, brightened the rugged summits of Dumbuck, and, spreading its golden fires over Dunbarton moor, gilded the brow of Dungoin, and lighted **up** the magnificent vista which opens between them of the dark and distant Grampians.

The appearance of the city was also in harmony with the general sublimity of the evening. Her smoky canopy was lowered almost to a covering—a mist from the river hovered along her skirts and scattered buildings, but here and there some lofty edifice stood proudly eminent, and the pinnacles of the steeples glittering like spear-points through the cloud, suggested

to the fancy strange and solemn images of heavenly guardians, stationed to oppose the adversaries of man.

A scene so wild, so calm, and yet so troubled and darkened, would, at any time, have heightened the enthusiasm of young Walkinshaw, but the state of his feelings made him more than ordinarily susceptible to the eloquence of its various lights and shadows. The uncertainty which wavered in the prospects of his future life, found a mystical reflex in the swift and stormy wrack of the carry, that some unfelt wind was silently urging along the distant horizon. The still and stationary objects around—the protected city and the everlasting hills, seemed to bear an assurance, that, however obscured the complexion of his fortunes might at that moment be, there was still something within himself that ought not to suffer any change, from the evanescent circumstances of another's frown or favour. This confidence in himself, felt perhaps for the first time that evening,

gave a degree of vigour and decision to the determination which he had formed ; and by the time he had reached the porch of his uncle's mansion, his step was firm, his emotions regulated, and a full and manly self-possession had succeeded to the fluctuating feelings, with which he left Glasgow, in so much that even his countenance seemed to have received some new impress, and to have lost the softness of youth, and taken more decidedly the cast and characteristics of manhood.

CHAP. XXXI.

WALKINSHAW found his uncle alone, who, after some slight inquiries, relative to unimportant matters of business, said to him,—

“ I have been desirous to see you, because I am anxious to make some family arrangements, to which, though I do not anticipate any objection on your part, as they will be highly advantageous to your interests, it is still proper that we should clearly understand each other respecting. It is unnecessary to inform you, that, by the disinheritance of your father, I came to the family estate, which, in the common course of nature, might have been yours—and you are quite aware, that, from the time it became necessary to cognosce your uncle, I have uniformly done more for your mo-

ther's family than could be claimed or was expected of me."

"I am sensible of all that, Sir," replied Walkinshaw, "and I hope there is nothing which you can reasonably expect me to do, that I shall not feel pleasure in performing."

His uncle was not quite satisfied with this ; the firmness with which it was uttered, and the self-reservation which it implied—were not propitious to his wishes, but he resumed,—

"In the course of a short time, you will naturally be looking to me for some establishment in business, and certainly if you conduct yourself as you have hitherto done, it is but right that I should do something for you—much, however, will depend, as to the extent of what I may do, on the disposition with which you fall in with my views. Now, what I wish particularly to say to you is, that having but one child, and my circumstances enabling me to retire from the active management of the house, it is in my power to resign a consi-

derable share in your favour—and this it is my wish to do in the course of two or three years ; if”—and he paused, looking his nephew steadily in the face.

“ I trust,” said Walkinshaw, “ it can be coupled with no condition that will prevent me from availing myself of your great liberality.”

His uncle was still more damped by this than by the former observation, and he replied peevishly,—

“ I think, young man, considering your destitute circumstances, you might be a little more grateful for my friendship. It is but a cold return to suppose I would subject you to any condition that you would not gladly agree to.”

This, though hastily conceived, was not so sharply expressed as to have occasioned any particular sensation ; but the train of Walkinshaw’s reflections, with his suspicion of the object for which he was that evening invited to the country, made him feel it acutely, and his blood mounted at

the allusion to his poverty. Still without petulance, but in an emphatic manner, he replied,—

“ I have considered your friendship always as disinterested, and as such I have felt and cherished the sense of gratitude which it naturally inspired; but I frankly confess, that, had I any reason to believe it was less so than I hope it is, I doubt I should be unable to feel exactly as I have hitherto felt.”

“ And in the name of goodness!” exclaimed his uncle, at once surprised and apprehensive; “ what reason have you to suppose that I was not actuated by my regard for you as my nephew?”

“ I have never had any, nor have I said so,” replied Walkinshaw; “but you seem to suspect that I may not be so agreeable to some purpose you intend as the obligations you have laid me under, perhaps, entitle you to expect.”

“ The purpose I intend,” said the uncle, “ is the strongest proof that I can give you

of my affection. It is nothing less than founded on a hope that you will so demean yourself, as to give me the pleasure, in due time, of calling you by a dearer name than nephew."

Notwithstanding all the preparations which Walkinshaw had made to hear the proposal with firmness, it overcame him like a thunder-clap—and he sat some time looking quickly from side to side, and unable to answer.

"You do not speak," said his uncle, and he added, softly and inquisitively, "Is there any cause to make you averse to Robina?—I trust I may say to you, as a young man of discretion and good sense, that there is no green and foolish affection which ought for a moment to weigh with you against the advantages of a marriage with your cousin—Were there nothing else held out to you, the very circumstance of regaining so easily the patrimony, which your father had so inconsiderately forfeited, should of itself be sufficient. But, be-

sides that, on the day you are married to Robina, it is my fixed intent to resign the greatest part of my concern in the house to you, thereby placing you at once in opulence."

While he was thus earnestly speaking, Walkinshaw recovered his self-possession ; and being averse to give a disagreeable answer, he said, that he could not but duly estimate, to the fullest extent, all the advantages which the connection would insure ; but, said he, " Have you spoken to Robina herself?"

" No," replied his uncle, with a smile of satisfaction, anticipating from the question something like a disposition to acquiesce in his views. " No; I leave that to you—that's your part. You now know my wishes ; and I trust and hope you are sensible that few proposals could be made to you so likely to promote your best interests."

Walkinshaw saw the difficulties of his situation. He could no longer equivocate with them. It was impossible, he felt, to

say that he would speak on the subject to Robina, without being guilty of duplicity towards his uncle. Besides this, he conceived it would sully the honour and purity of his affection for Ellen Frazer to allow himself to seek any declaration of refusal from Robina, however certain of receiving it. His uncle saw his perplexity, and said,—

“ This proposal seems to have very much disconcerted you—but I will be plain; for, in a matter on which my heart is so much set, it is prudent to be candid. I do not merely suspect, but have some reason to believe, that you have formed a school-boy attachment to Mrs Eadie’s young friend. Now, without any other remark on the subject, I will only say, that, though Miss Frazer is a very fine girl, and of a most respectable family, there is nothing in the circumstances of her situation compared with those of your cousin, that would make any man of sense hesitate between them.”

So thought Walkinshaw; for, in his

opinion, the man of sense would at once prefer Ellen.

“ However,” continued his uncle,—“ I will not at present press this matter farther. I have opened my mind to you, and I make no doubt, that you will soon see the wisdom and propriety of acceding to my wishes.”

Walkinshaw thought he would be acting unworthy of himself if he allowed his uncle to entertain any hope of his compliance ; and, accordingly, he said, with some degree of agitation, but not so much as materially to affect the force with which he expressed himself,—

“ I will not deny that your information with respect to Miss Frazer is correct ; and the state of our sentiments renders it impossible that I should for a moment suffer you to expect I can ever look on Robina but as my cousin.”

“ Well, well, James,” interrupted his uncle,—“ I know all that ; and I calculated on hearing as much, and even more ;

but take time to reflect on what I have proposed; and I shall be perfectly content to see the result in your actions. So, let us go to your aunt's room, and take tea with her and Robina."

"Impossible!—never!" exclaimed Wal-kinshaw, rising;—"I cannot allow you for a moment longer to continue in so fallacious an expectation. My mind is made up; my decision was formed before I came here; and no earthly consideration will induce me to forego an affection that has grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength."

His uncle laughed, and rubbed his hands, exceedingly amused at this rhapsody, and said, with the most provoking coolness,—

"I shall not increase your flame by stirring the fire—you are still but a youth—and it is very natural that you should have a love fit—all, therefore, that I mean to say at present is, take time—consider—reflect on the fortune you may obtain, and contrast it with the penury and dependence to

which your father and mother exposed themselves by the rash indulgence of an inconsiderate attachment."

"Sir," exclaimed Walkinshaw, fervently, "I was prepared for the proposal you have made, and my determination with respect to it was formed and settled before I came here."

"Indeed!" said his uncle coldly; "and pray what is it?"

"To quit Glasgow; to forego all the pecuniary advantages that I may derive from my connection with you—if"—and he made a full stop and looked his uncle severely in the face,—“if,” he resumed, “your kindness was dictated with a view to this proposal.”

A short silence ensued, in which Walkinshaw still kept his eye brightly and keenly fixed on his uncle's face; but the Laird was too much a man of the world not to be able to endure this scrutiny.

"You are a strange fellow," he at last said, with a smile, that he intended should

be conciliatory ; “ but as I was prepared for a few heroics I can forgive you.”

“ Forgive !” cried the hot and indignant youth ; “ what have I done to deserve such an insult ? I thought your kindness merited my gratitude. I felt towards you as a man should feel towards a great benefactor ; but now it would almost seem that you have in all your kindness but pursued some sinister purpose. Why am I selected to be your instrument ? Why are my feelings and affections to be sacrificed on your sordid altars ?”

He found his passion betraying him into irrational extravagance, and, torn by the conflict within him, he covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears.

“ This is absolute folly, James,” said his uncle soberly.

“ It is not folly,” was again his impassioned answer. “ My words may be foolish, but my feelings are at this moment wise. I cannot for ten times all your fortune, told a hundred times, endure to think

I may be induced to barter my heart. It may be that I am ungrateful ; if so, as I can never feel otherwise upon the subject than I do, send me away, as unworthy longer to share your favour ; but worthy I shall nevertheless be of something still better."

" Young man, you will be more reasonable to-morrow," said his uncle contemptuously, and immediately left the room. Walkinshaw at the same moment also took his hat, and, rushing towards the door, quitted the house ; but in turning suddenly round the corner, he ran against Robina, who, having some idea of the object of his visit, had been listening at the window to their conversation.

CHAP. XXXII.

THE agitation in which Walkinshaw was at the moment when he encountered Robina, prevented him from being surprised at meeting her, and also from suspecting the cause which had taken her to that particular place so late in the evening. The young lady was more cool and collected, as we believe young ladies always are on such occasions, and she was the first who spoke.

“Where are you running so fast?” said she. “I thought you would have staid tea. Will you not go back with me? My mother expects you.”

“Your father does not,” replied Walkinshaw tersely; “and I wish it had been my fortune never to have set my foot within his door.”

“ Dear me !” exclaimed Miss Robina, as artfully as if she had known nothing, nor overheard every word which had passed. “ What has happened ? I hope nothing has occurred to occasion any quarrel between you. Do think, James, how prejudicial it must be to your interests to quarrel with my father.”

“ Curse that eternal word interests !” was the unceremonious answer. “ Your father seems to think that human beings have nothing but interests ; that the heart keeps a ledger, and values every thing in pounds sterling. Our best affections, our dearest feelings, are with him only as tare, that should pass for nothing in the weight of moral obligations.”

“ But stop,” said Robina, “ don’t be in such a hurry ; tell me what all this means—what has affections and dear feelings to do with your counting-house affairs ?—I thought you and he never spoke of any thing but rum puncheons and sugar cargoes.”

“ He is incapable of knowing the value of any thing less tangible and vendible !” exclaimed her cousin—“ but I have done with both him and you.”

“ Me !” cried Miss Robina, with an accent of the most innocent admiration, that any sly and shrewd miss of eighteen could possibly assume.—“ Me ! what have I to do with your hopes and your affections, and your tangible and vendible commodities ?”

“ I beg your pardon, I meant no offence to you, Robina—I am overborne by my feelings,” said Walkinshaw ; “ and if you knew what has passed, you would sympathise with me.”

“ But as I do not,” replied the young lady coolly, “ you must allow me to say that your behaviour appears to me very extravagant—surely nothing has passed between you and my father that I may not know ?”

This was said in a manner that instantly recalled Walkinshaw to his senses.

The deep and cunning character of his cousin he had often before remarked—with, we may say plainly, aversion—and he detected at once in the hollow and sonorous affectation of sympathy with which her voice was tuned, particularly in the latter clause of the sentence, the insincerity and hypocrisy of her conduct.—He did not, however, suspect that she had been playing the eaves-dropper ; and, therefore, still tempered with moderation his expression of the sentiments she was so ingeniously leading him on to declare.

“ No,” said he calmly, “ nothing has passed between your father and me that you may not know, but it will come more properly from him, for it concerns you, and in a manner that I can never take interest or part in.”

“ Concerns me ! concerns me !” exclaimed the actress ; “ it is impossible that any thing of mine could occasion a misunderstanding between you.”

“ But it has,” said Walkinshaw ; “ and

to deal with you, Robina, as you ought to be dealt with, for affecting to be so ignorant of your father's long evident wishes and intents—he has actually declared that he is most anxious we should be married.”

“ I can see no harm in that,” said she, adding drily, “ provided it is not to one another.”

“ But it is to one another,” said Walkinshaw, unguardedly, and in the simplicity of earnestness, which Miss perceiving, instantly with the adroitness of her sex turned to account—saying with well feigned diffidence,—

“ I do not see why that should be so distressing to you.”

“ No!” replied he. “ But the thing can never be, and it is of no use for us to talk of it—so good night.”

“ Stay,” cried Robina,—“ what you have told me deserves consideration.—Surely I have given you no reason to suppose that in a matter so important, I may not

find it my interest to comply with my father's wishes."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Walkinshaw, raising his clenched hands in a transport to the skies.

"Why are you so vehement?" said Robina.

"Because," replied he solemnly, "interest seems the everlasting consideration of our family—interest disinherited my father—interest made my uncle Walter consign my mother to poverty—interest proved the poor repentant wretch insane—interest claims the extinction of all I hold most precious in life,—and interest would make me baser than the most sordid of all our sordid race."

"Then I am to understand you dislike me so much, that you have refused to accede to my father's wishes, for our mutual happiness?"

"For our mutual misery, I have refused to accede," was the abrupt reply—"and if you had not some motive for appear-

ing to feel otherwise—which motive I neither can penetrate nor desire to know, you would be as resolute in your objection to the bargain as I am—match I cannot call it, for it proceeds in a total oblivion of all that can endear or ennoble such a permanent connection.”

Miss was conscious of the truth of this observation, and with all her innate address, it threw her off her guard, and she said,—

“ Why do you suppose that I am so insensible? My father may intend what he pleases, but my consent must be obtained before he can complete his intentions.” She had, however, scarcely said so much, when she perceived she was losing the ’vantage-ground that she had so dexterously occupied, and she turned briskly round and added, “ But, James, why should we fall out about this?—there is time enough before us to consider the subject dispassionately—my father cannot mean that the marriage should take place immediately.”

“ Robina, you are your father’s daughter, and the heiress of his nature as well as of his estate—no such marriage ever can or shall take place; nor do you wish it should—but I am going too far—it is enough that I declare my affections irrevocably engaged, and that I will never listen to a second proposition on that subject, which has to-night driven me wild. I have quitted your father—I intend it for ever—I will never return to his office. All that I built on my connection with him is now thrown down—perhaps with it my happiness is also lost—but no matter, I cannot be a dealer in such bargaining as I have heard to-night. I am thankful to Providence that gave me a heart to feel better, and friends who taught me to think more nobly. However, I waste my breath and spirits idly; my resolution is fixed, and when I say Good night, I mean Farewell.”

With these words he hurried away, and, after walking a short time on the lawn, Robina returned into the house; and go-

ing up to her mother's apartment, where her father was sitting, she appeared as unconcerned and unconscious of the two preceding conversations, as if she had neither been a listener to the one, nor an actress in the other.

On entering the room, she perceived that her father had been mentioning to her mother something of what had passed between himself and her cousin; but it was her interest, on account of the direction which her affections had taken, to appear ignorant of many things, and studiously to avoid any topic with her father that might lead him to suspect her bent; for she had often observed, that few individuals could be proposed to him as a match for her, that he entertained so strong a prejudice against; although really, in point of appearance, relationship, and behaviour, it could hardly be said that the object of her preference was much inferior to her romantic cousin. The sources and motives of that prejudice she was, however, regard-

less of discovering. She considered it in fact as an unreasonable and unaccountable antipathy, and was only anxious for the removal of any cause that might impede the consummation she devoutly wished. Glad, therefore, to be so fully mistress of Walkinshaw's sentiments as she had that night made herself, she thought, by a judicious management of her knowledge, she might overcome her father's prejudice ; —and the address and dexterity with which she tried this we shall attempt to describe in the following Chapter.

CHAP. XXXIII.

“ I THOUGHT,” said she, after seating herself at the tea-table, “ that my cousin would have stopped to-night ; but I understand he has gone away.”

“ Perhaps,” replied her father, “ had you requested him, he might have staid.”

“ I don’t think he would for me,” was her answer.—“ He does not appear particularly satisfied when I attempt to interfere with any of his proceedings.”

“ Then you do sometimes attempt to interfere ?” said her father, somewhat surprised at the observation, and not suspecting that she had heard one word of what had passed, every syllable of which was carefully stored in the treasury of her bosom.

The young lady perceived that she was

proceeding a little too quickly, and drew in her horns.

“All,” said she, “that I meant to remark was, that he is not very tractable, which I regret ;” and she contrived to give a sigh.

“Why should you regret it so particularly ?” inquired her father, a little struck at the peculiar accent with which she had expressed herself.

“I cannot tell,” was her adroit reply ; and then she added, in a brisker tone,—
“But I wonder what business I have to trouble myself about him ?”

For some time her father made no return to this ; but, pushing back his chair from the tea-table till he had reached the chimney-corner, he leant his elbow on the mantle-piece, and appeared for several minutes in a state of profound abstraction. In the meantime, Mrs Walkinshaw had continued the conversation with her daughter, observing to her that she did, indeed, think her cousin must be a very headstrong

lad ; for he had spoken that night to her father in such a manner as had not only astonished but distressed him. “ However,” said she,—“ he is still a mere boy ; and, I doubt not, will, before long is past, think better of what his uncle has been telling him.”

“ I am extremely sorry,” replied Robina, with the very voice of the most artless sympathy, though, perhaps, a little more accentuated than simplicity would have employed—“ I am very sorry, indeed, that any difference has arisen between him and my father. I am sure I have always heard him spoken of as an amiable and very deserving young man. I trust it is of no particular consequence.”

“ It is of the utmost consequence,” interposed her father ; “ and it is of more to you than to any other besides.”

“ To me, Sir ! how is that possible ?—What have I to do with him, or he with me ? I am sure, except in being more deficient in his civilities than those of most of

my acquaintance, I have had no occasion to remark any thing particular in his behaviour or conduct towards me."

"I know it—I know it," exclaimed her father; "and therein lies the source of all my anxiety."

"I fear that I do not rightly understand you," said the cunning girl.

"Nor do I almost wish that you ever should; but, nevertheless, my heart is so intent on the business, that I think, were you to second my endeavours, the scheme might be accomplished."

"The scheme—What scheme?" replied the most unaffected Robina.

"In a word, child," said her father, "How would you like James as a husband?"

"How can I tell?" was her simple answer. "He has never given me any reason to think on the subject."

"You cannot, however, but long have seen that it was with me a favourite object?"

“ I confess it ;—and, perhaps, I have myself,” she said, with a second sigh—“ thought more of it than I ought to have done; but I have never had any encouragement from him.”

“ How unhappy am I,” thought her father to himself—“ The poor thing is as much disposed to the match as my heart could hope for.—Surely, surely, by a little address and perseverance, the romantic boy may be brought to reason and to reflect ;” and he then said to her—“ My dear Robina, you have been the subject of my conversation with James this evening ; but I am grieved to say, that his sentiments, at present, are neither favourable to your wishes nor to mine.—He seems enchanted by Mrs Eadie’s relation, and talked so much nonsense on the subject that we almost quarrelled.”

“ I shall never accept of a divided heart,” said the young lady despondingly ; “ and I entreat, my dear father, that you will never take another step in the business ; for, as

as long as I can recollect, he has viewed me with eyes of aversion—and in all that time he has been the playmate, and the lover, perhaps, of Ellen Frazer.—Again I implore you to abandon every idea of promoting a union between him and me : It can never take place on his part but from the most sordid considerations of interest ; nor on mine without feeling that I have been but as a bale bargained for.”

Her father listened with attention to what she said—it appeared reasonable—it was spirited ; but there was something, nevertheless, in it which did not quite satisfy his mind, though the sense was clear and complete.

“ Of course,” he replied guardedly ; “ I should never require you to bestow your hand where you had not already given your affections ; but it does not follow, that because the headstrong boy is at this time taken up with Miss Frazer, that he is always to remain of the same mind. On the contrary, Robina, were you to exert a little

address, I am sure you would soon draw him from that unfortunate attachment."

"What woman," said she, with an air of supreme dignity, "would submit to pilfer the betrothed affections of any man? No—Sir, I cannot do that—nor ought I; and pardon me when I use the expression, nor will I. Had my cousin made himself more agreeable to me, I do not say that such would have been my sentiments; but having seen nothing in his behaviour that can lead me to hope from him any thing but the same constancy in his dislike which I have ever experienced, I should think myself base, indeed, were I to allow you to expect that I may alter my opinion."

Nothing farther passed at that time; for to leave the impression which she intended to produce as strong as possible, she immediately rose and left the room. Her father soon after also quitted his seat, and after taking two or three turns across the floor, went to his own apartment.

"I am the most unfortunate of men,"

said he to himself, "and my poor Robina is no less frustrated in her affections. I cannot, however, believe that the boy is so entirely destitute of prudence as not to think of what I have told him. I must give him time. Old heads do not grow on young shoulders. But it never occurred to me that Robina was attached to him; on the contrary, I have always thought that the distaste was stronger on her part than on his. But it is of no use to vex myself on the subject. Let me rest satisfied to-night with having ascertained that at least on Robina's part there is no objection to the match. My endeavours hereafter must be directed to detach James from the girl Frazer. It will, however, be no easy task, for he is ardent and enthusiastic, and she has undoubtedly many of those graces which readiest find favour in a young man's eye."

He then hastily rose, and hurriedly paced the room.

"Why am I cursed," he exclaimed,

“with this joyless and barren fate? Were Robina a son, all my anxieties would be hushed; but with her my interest in the estate of my ancestors terminates. Her mother, however, may yet”—and he paused. “It is very weak,” he added, in a moment after, “to indulge in these reflections. I have a plain task before me, and instead of speculating on hopes and chances, I ought to set earnestly about it, and leave no stone unturned till I have performed it thoroughly.”

With this he composed his mind for the remainder of the evening, and when he again joined Robina and her mother, the conversation by all parties was studiously directed to indifferent topics.

CHAP. XXXIV.

THERE are few things more ludicrous. and at the same time more interesting, than the state of a young man in love, unless, perhaps, it be that of an old man in the same unfortunate situation. The warmth of the admiration, the blindness of the passion, and the fond sincerity of the enthusiasm, which gives grace and sentiment to the instinct, all awaken sympathy, and even inspire a degree of compassionate regard ; but the extravagance of feeling beyond what any neutral person can sympathise with, the ostrich-like simplicity of the expedients resorted to in assignations, and that self-approved sagacity and prudence in concealing what every body with half an eye can see, afford the most harmless and diverting spectacles of human ab-

surdity. However, as we are desirous of conciliating the reverence of the young and fair, perhaps it may be as well to say nothing more on this head, but allow them to enjoy, in undisturbed faith, the amiable anticipation of that state of beatitude which Heaven, and all married personages, know is but a very very transient enchantment.

But we cannot, with any regard to the fidelity of circumstantial history, omit to relate what passed in young Walkinshaw's bosom, after he parted from his cousin.—To render it in some degree picturesque, we might describe his appearance; but when we spoke of him as a handsome manly youth for his inches and his eild, we said perhaps as much as we could well say upon that head, unless we were to paint the colour and fashion of his clothes,—a task in which we have no particular relish;—and, therefore, we may just briefly mention, that they were in the style of the sprucest clerks of Glasgow; and every body

knows, that if the bucks of the Trongate would only button their coats, they might pass for gentlemen of as good blood and breeding as the best in Bond Street. But, even though Walkinshaw had been in the practice of buttoning his, he was that night in no condition to think of it. His whole bosom was as a flaming furnace—raging as fiercely as those of the Muirkirk Iron Works that served to illuminate his path.

He felt as if he had been held in a state of degradation; and had been regarded as so destitute of all the honourable qualities of a young man, that he would not scruple to barter himself in the most sordid manner. His spirit then mounting on the exulting wings of youthful hope, bore him aloft into the cloudy and meteoric region of romance, and visions of fortune and glory almost too splendid for the aching sight of his fancy, presented themselves in a thousand smiling forms, beckoning him away from the smoky confines and foetid airs of

Glasgow, and pointing to some of the brightest and beaming bubbles that allure fantastic youth. But, in the midst of these glittering visions of triumphant adventure, "a change came o'er the spirit of his dream," and he beheld Ellen Frazer in the simple and tasteful attire in which she appeared so beautiful at Camrachie church. In the back ground of the sunny scene was a pretty poetical cottage, with a lamb tethered by the foot on the green, surrounded by a flock of snowy geese, enjoying their noon-tide siesta, and on the ground troops of cocks and hens, with several gabbling bandy-legged ducks ; at the sight of which another change soon came o'er the spirit of his dream ; and the elegant mansion that his uncle had made of the old house of Grippy, with all its lawns and plantations, and stately gate and porter's lodge, together with an elegant carriage in the avenue, presented a most alluring picture.— But it, too, soon vanished ; and in the next change, he beheld Robina converted into

his wife, carping at all his little pranks and humours, and studious only of her own enjoyments, without having any consideration for those that might be his. Then all was instantly darkened ; and after a terrible burst of whirlwinds, and thunder and lightning, the cloud again opened, and he saw in its phantasmagorial mirror—a calm and summer sunset, with his beautiful Ellen Frazer in the shape of a venerable matron, partaking of the temperate pleasures of an aged man, seated on a rustic seat, under a tree, on the brow of Camrachie-bank, enjoying the beauties of the view, and talking of their children's children ; and in the visage of that aged man, he discovered a most respectable resemblance of himself.—So fine a close of a life, untroubled by any mischance, malady, or injustice, could not fail to produce the most satisfactory result. Accordingly, he decidedly resolved, that it should be his ; and that, as he had previously determin-

ed, the connection with his uncle should thenceforth be cut for ever.

By the time that imagination rather than reason had worked him into this decision, he arrived at Glasgow ; and being resolved to carry his intention into immediate effect, instead of going to the house where he was boarded, at his uncle's expence, he went to the Leddy's, partly with the intention of remaining there, but chiefly to remonstrate with her for having spoken of his attachment to Ellen Frazer ; having concluded, naturally enough, that it was from her his uncle had received the information.

On entering the parlour he found the old lady seated alone, in her elbow chair, at the fireside. A single slender candle stood at her elbow, on a small claw-foot table ; and she was winding the yarn from a pirn, with a hand-reel, carefully counting the turns. Hearing the door open, she looked round, and seeing who it was, said,—

“ Is that thee, Jamie Walkinshaw ?—six and thirty—where came ye frae—seven and thirty—at this time o’ night ?—eight and thirty—sit ye down—nine and thirty—snuff the candle—forty.”

“ I’ll wait till ye’re done,” said he, “ as I wish to tell you something—for I have been out at Kittlestonheugh, where I had some words with my uncle.”

“ No possible !—nine and forty,”—replied the Leddy ;—“ what hast been about ?—fifty.”——

“ He seems to regard me as if I had neither a will nor feelings, neither a head nor a heart.”

“ I hope ye hae baith—five and fifty—but hae ye been condumacious ?—seven and—plague tak the laddie, I’m out in my count, and I’ll hae to begin the cutt again ; so I may set by the reel. What were you saying, Jamie, anent an outcast wi’ your uncle ?”

“ He has used me exceedingly ill—rip-

ping up the obligations he has laid me under, and taunting me with my poverty."

"And is't no true that ye're obligated to him, and that, but for the unclly duty he has fulfilled towards you, ye would this night hae been a bare lad?—gude kens an ye would na hae been as scant o' cleeding as a salmon in the river."

"It may be so, but when it is considered that he got the family estate by a quirk of law, he could scarcely have done less than he did for my unfortunate father's family. But I could have forgiven all that, had he not, in a way insulting to my feelings, intimated that he expected I would break with Ellen Frazer, and offer myself to Robina."

"And sure am I, Jamie," replied the Leddy, "that it will be lang before you can do better."

"My mind, however, is made up," said he; "and to-morrow morning I shall go to Camrachle, and tell my mother that I have resolved to leave Glasgow.—I will never again set my foot in the counting-house."

“ Got ye ony drink, Jamie, in the gait hame, that ye’re in sic a wud humour for dancing “Auld Sir Simon the King,” on the road to Camrackle?—Man, an I had as brisk a bee in the bonnet, I would set aff at ance, cracking my fingers at the moon and seven stars as I gaed louping alang.—But, to speak the words of soberness, I’m glad ye hae discretion enough to tak a night’s rest first.”

“ Do not think so lightly of my determination—It is fixed—and, from the moment I quitted Kittlestonheugh, I resolved to be no longer under any obligation to my uncle—He considers me as a mere passive instrument for his own ends.”

“ Hegh, Sirs! man, but ye hae a great share o’ sagacity,” exclaimed the Leddy; “ and because your uncle is fain that ye should marry his only dochter, and would, if ye did sae, leave you for dowry and tocher a braw estate and a bank o’ siller, ye think he has pookit you by the nose.”

“ No—not for that; but because he thinks so meanly of me, as to expect that.

for mercenary considerations, I would bargain away both my feelings and my principles."

"Sure am I he would ne'er mint ony sic matter," replied the Leddy; "and if he wantit you to break wi' yon galloping nymph o' the Highland heather, and draw up wi' that sweet primrose-creature, your cousin Beenie, wha is a lassie o' sense and composity, and might be a match to majesty, it was a' for your honour and exaltation."

"Don't distress me any farther with the subject," said he. "Will you have the goodness to let me stay here to-night? for, as I told you, there shall never now be any addition made to the obligations which have sunk me so low."

"'Deed my lad, an ye gang on in that deleerit manner, I'll no only gie you a bed, but send baith for a doctor and a gradawa, that your head may be shaved, and a' proper remedies—outwardly and inwardly—gotten to bring you back to a right

way o' thinking.—But to end a' debates, ye'll just pack up your ends and your awls and gang hame to Mrs Spruill's, for the tow's to spin and the woo's to card that 'ill be the sheets and blankets o' your bed in this house the night—tak my word for't."

"In that case, I will at once go to Camrachle. The night is fine, and the moon's up."

"Awa wi' you, and show how weel ye hae come to years o' discretion, by singing as ye gang,—

" Scotsman ho ! Scotsman lo !
Where shall this poor Scotsman go ?
Send him east, send him west,
Send him to the craw's nest."

Notwithstanding the stern mood that Walkinshaw was in, this latter sally of his grandmother's eccentric humour compelled him to laugh, and he said gaily, " But I shall be none the worse of a little supper

before I set out. I hope you will not refuse me that?"

The old Lady, supposing that she had effectually brought him, as she said, round to himself, cheerfully acquiesced; but she was not a little disappointed, when, after some light and ludicrous conversation on general topics, he still so persisted either to remain in the house or to proceed to his mother's, that she found herself obliged to order a bed to be prepared for him—at the same time she continued to express her confidence, that he would be in a more docile humour next morning. "I hope," said she, "nevertheless, that the spirit of obedience will soople that stiff neck o' thine, in the slumbers and watches of the night, or I ne'er would be consenting to countenance such outstrapulous rebellion."

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

